



Dear Families,

I am pleased to share good news with you and your family members! Last week, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) released an updated visitation policy. This means there are now additional ways you can visit with your loved ones living in Advocates group living environments – both at the homes and off-site.

We've adjusted Advocates visitation policies and practices following the DDS updated rules. **Please review the full guidance from DDS [here](#).**

**A few highlights are below:**

Visits to group living environments

- Visits will be permitted in designated outdoor areas
- Visits must be scheduled with staff ahead of time.
- Visitors are limited to two guests at a time.
- Visitors will be screened prior to visiting with a resident.
- Visitors are not permitted to visit if they have symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, or new loss of taste or smell.
- Anyone with a fever (100.0 F or higher) will not be permitted to visit.
- Visitors are not permitted to visit if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days or if they have been ordered by a health care professional or public health official to quarantine due to exposure.

- Face coverings or masks must be worn.
- Social distancing will be observed.

#### Off-site visits

- Off-site visitors are permitted for residents who are not currently under isolation or quarantined.
- Visits are permitted for residents and visitors who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a temperature of >100.0 deg F.
- The family member or loved one coordinating the visit must sign an attestation form, attesting that:
  - All individuals who the resident plans on visiting are free from any symptoms of COVID19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, or new loss of taste or smell, and have not been in close contact with anyone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
  - Close contact will be prevented with anyone who has not been screened for symptoms of COVID-19.
  - A face mask or covering will be worn by all visitors, and by the resident if they can do so safely, while unable to socially distance, indoors including in the family home, and in other enclosed areas such as a car.
  - If staying overnight, the resident will sleep in their own room, or if not possible, at least six feet from others, to the greatest extent possible.
  - Medical attention will be sought by family and the residential program will be notified if individual starts displaying symptoms of illness or comes into contact with a COVID-19 positive person while away on visit.
  - Infection control protocols will be followed during the entirety of the visit.
- For home visits, family or loved ones will be asked to provide the names and contact information for any person the resident is anticipated to come into contact with on the visit in case contact tracing becomes necessary.

Family Communication COVID-19 Update 7/13/20

Subject Line: Visitor Policy Update

Family or loved ones should communicate modifications to this section of the form upon return.

I understand how difficult it has been to stay connected to your loved one over the past few months. I am grateful for your understanding while we adhere to the DDS visitation policy that follows guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). Please know that our focus is on keeping everyone safe and healthy.

Enjoy the beautiful weather with your loved ones and thank you for all that you do.

Be well,

Diane Gould  
President & CEO

## Follow Us



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