

September 24, 2020

Dear Berkshire Healthcare residents and families,

At all our affiliates across our organization, our staff continues their diligent work to ensure that our residents are kept as safe and healthy as possible during this time where COVID-19 continues to overshadow our daily lives. We would like to thank you, our residents' loved ones, for your patience, understanding and cooperation during these challenging times. We understand the physical and emotional toll that this situation has had on our residents and their families and friends. Visitation guidelines have decidedly been one of our bigger challenges as the state of Massachusetts regulatory efforts have been in place to aggressively fight the limit of exposure and spread of the virus.

As of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, all skilled nursing facilities across the state were able to offer outside visitation for residents and their families. **As of September 25, 2020**, it pleases us to announce that **indoor visits** will also now be allowed at skilled nursing facilities as the colder weather is knocking on our doors. **These PRE-SCHEDULED visits will require the same stringent adherence to procedures for the safety of our residents** and please note that if community transmission rates become high, the state department of health (DPH) has the right to amend any visitation conditions.

**In-person visitation is allowed as of September 25, 2020 in a DESIGNATED OUTDOOR AND INDOOR VISITATION SPACE, given that all safety, care and infection control measures are implemented. These include:**

- Visitations are limited to **NO MORE THAN TWO INDIVIDUALS/visitors** at any given time.
- All visitors will be screened for fever or respiratory symptoms. Any individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 infection (fever equal to or greater than 100.0 F, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, myalgia, chills or new onset of loss of taste or smell) will not be permitted to visit with a resident.
- A visitor(s) must **always** remain **at least 6 feet from the resident** and attending staff member(s) during the majority of the visit.
- Staff and residents must wear a surgical face mask and visitors must wear a face covering or mask for the duration of the visit.
- -A resident who is suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 cannot participate in a visitation. A resident may be visited if: the resident has recovered from COVID-19; or the resident is currently quarantined after a recent hospital stay and is not suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, or the resident is not quarantined and has never tested positive for COVID-19.
- Brief physical contact may be allowed if desired by both the resident and visitor. To reduce risk of transmission, individuals must:
  - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before and after contact
  - Hug with faces in opposite directions
  - Limit the duration of close physical contact and avoid close face-to-face contact even when face masks are used.

**IMPORTANT: Visits must be scheduled in advance WITH A FACILITY CONTACT and we will require you to provide your phone number and email for all visitors. Refer to administration at your loved one's specific building for scheduling procedure and contact. Additionally, visits are dependent on availability of space, and staffing at the facility to meet resident care needs, and the health and well-being of the resident. The frequency of allowed visits will also be determined by the same criteria.**

We realize the stress that visitation restrictions have placed on so many up until now and we appreciate your compliance and understanding that it is all **to keep you and your loved ones safe**. Please understand that visitors that are not able to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention will be asked to leave to protect the well-being of our residents and community.

While weather permits, scheduled outdoor visitation and virtual video conferencing continues to be the primary and encouraged form of communication between you and your loved one. We have iPads that are used exclusively for resident-family video chatting sessions via facetime, zoom, skype and google duo. You have our assurance that we will continue to keep you informed as any updates occur. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support, patience and understanding as we continue to navigate this complex and unpredictable virus. It means everything to our residents and staff. Please be well.