

Hiram W. Davis Medical Center  
Instruction

Instruction No. <b>4721.2</b>	Effective Date: <b>03/17/2021</b>
Subject: <b>Visitation During (COVID-19)</b>	Reviewed Date:
Approved:	Revised Date:
Director	Evaluation Date: <b>07/01/2023</b>

**REFERENCES:**

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (September 17, 2020). Nursing Home Visitation -COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh.pdf>
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (Revised 3.10.2021). Nursing Home Visitation -COVID-19 <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>
- American Disabilities Act Titles II and III Regulations [https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleII\\_2010/titleII\\_2010\\_regulations.htm#a35104](https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleII_2010/titleII_2010_regulations.htm#a35104)
- HDMC Policy: Compassionate Care and End of Life Visitation (COVID-19)

**PURPOSE:**

This instruction encompasses the guidance to ensure HDMC safely provides visitation in reasonable ways which addresses the psychosocial needs of its residents **and** prevents potential healthcare associated infection (HAI) transmission of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to its residents, patients, staff and visitors.

**CANCELLATION:**

None.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Fully vaccinated** refers to a person who is  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the [CDC's Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons](#).

## CORE PRINCIPLES OF COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION

1. Screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions *about and* observations *of* signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms *or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status)*
2. Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
3. Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose)
4. Social distancing at least six feet between persons
5. Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene)
6. Cleaning and disinfecting high-frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
7. Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
8. Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care)
9. Resident and staff testing conducted as required at 42 CFR § 483.80(h) (see QSO-20-38-NH)

### POLICY:

Hiram Davis Medical Center (HDMC) shall provide visitation via different means based on the facility's structure and residents' needs, such as in resident rooms, dedicated visitation spaces, outdoors, and for circumstances including compassionate care situations. This policy has been updated to include the newly released CMS visitation guidance for nursing homes including the impact of the COVID-19 vaccination.

### PROCEDURES:

#### A. Outdoor Visitation

1. HDMC recognizes outdoor visits pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Based on this, outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are **fully vaccinated**. However, HDMC combines a person-centered approach and adherence to the Core Principles of COVID-19, and understands outdoor visitation is not always practicable. Examples of when outdoor visitation may not be practical:
  - a. Inclement weather
  - b. Excessively hot or cold temperature
  - c. Poor air quality

- d. Resident health status or medical condition
  - e. COVID status
2. HDMC shall create outdoor spaces for visitation which are accessible and safe. All appropriate infection control prevention practices shall be adhered to.

## **B. Indoor Visitation**

1. HDMC allows indoor visitation at all times and for all residents **regardless of vaccination status**. The following guidelines have been established for indoor visitation to ensure safety for our residents, staff and visitors:
  - a. Visitation may be prioritized for eligible residents with emotional distress or other conditions that have been exacerbated by continued isolation
  - b. A maximum of two visitors are permitted to visit a resident at one time
  - c. If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.
  - d. A designated location for visitation will be established which limits movement within the facility, especially by visitors.
  - e. Visitation within a resident's room is limited to residents with private rooms. If there is a roommate and the resident's health status prevents them from leaving their room at all, visitation may occur in the room without the roommate present and the core principles (above) must be strictly followed. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the room must occur prior to the roommate returning.
2. There are a few scenarios when visitation including indoor may be limited due to the high risk of COVID-19 transmission. These scenarios include:
  - a. *Unvaccinated residents, if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10% **and** <70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;*
  - b. *Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions; or*
  - c. *Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.*

**NOTE:** Compassionate care visits will be permitted at all times. (See Compassionate Care Policy) The exclusion criteria for indoor visitation does not apply to compassionate care visits, which are permitted regardless of the facility's visitation status.

### C. Indoor Visitation During an Outbreak

1. When a new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff is identified, HDMC shall immediately begin outbreak testing and suspend all visitation (except that required under federal disability rights law), until at least one round of facility-wide testing is completed. Visitation can resume based on the following criteria:
  - a. If the first round of outbreak testing reveals **no additional COVID-19 cases in other areas (e.g., units) of the facility**, then visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases. However, HDMC will suspend visitation on the affected unit until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing.
    - For example, if the first round of outbreak testing reveals two more COVID-19 cases in the same unit as the original case, but not in other units, visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases.
  - b. If the first round of outbreak testing **reveals one or more additional COVID-19 cases in other areas/units of the facility** (e.g., new cases in two or more units), then HDMC shall suspend visitation for all residents (vaccinated and unvaccinated), until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing.
  - c. Visitors shall be notified about the potential for COVID-19 exposure in the facility (e.g., appropriate signage regarding current outbreaks), and adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, including effective hand hygiene and use of face-coverings.

### D. Visitor Requirements

1. Visitation should be limited to a maximum of 3 hours. Visitation requests for longer than 3 hours will be reviewed by the facility on a case-by-case basis. Check-in, screening, and check-out times do not count towards visit duration.
2. Only two visitors should be permitted to visit a resident at one time. If more than two visitors wish to visit at one time, HDMC will try to make arrangements on a case-by-case basis within space constraints.
3. Children must be accompanied by their guardian at all times. The child's guardian is responsible for ensuring the child follows safety measures, including social distancing and wearing a face

mask or cloth face covering appropriately for the duration of the visit. Face masks/cloth face coverings should not be used by any children under the age of two that have been approved by the facility to visit under special family circumstances.

4. Visitors must wear a cloth face covering or face mask over their mouth and nose for the duration of the visit, including to and from their vehicle or other mode of transportation. Face shields may not be used in lieu of face masks/cloth face coverings for visitors, though they may be used in addition to the mask or covering if the visitor so chooses.
5. Visitors should maintain social distancing for the duration of the visit, including remaining at least six feet away from residents.
6. HDMC acknowledges there is no substitute for physical contact such as a warm embrace. Therefore, residents who have been fully vaccinated may choose to have close contact including touch with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting mask and performing hand hygiene before and after. However, visitors should physically distance from other residents and staff in the facility.
7. Upon arrival for a visit, visitors must go directly to the designated visitor screening location to sign-in and provide contact information.
8. In the facility's designated visitor screening location, visitors must be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including checking temperature to assess for fever (100.4°F or greater).
9. Visitors must use alcohol-based hand rub upon entering and exiting the visitation location.
10. Visitors are only permitted in the designated visitor screening location and the designated visitation location.
11. Visitors must only visit the resident they intended to visit at the designated visitation location.
12. Visitors should contact the facility with any questions about the facility's current visitation policy

#### **E. Visitor Testing and Vaccination**

When the county positivity rate is medium or high, HDMC may offer testing to visitors. HDMC encourages visitors to be tested and/or vaccinated on their own. While visitor testing and

vaccination can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitors are not required to be tested or vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation.

**F. Other Visits**

Compassionate care visits, and visits required under federal disability rights law, will be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident's vaccination status, the county's COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak. See Compassionate Care Visit Policy.

Approved by:

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Katrina James, MPA  
Director of Quality & Compliance

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Susan Alabanza, OTR/L  
Clinical Director

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Valerie Pulliam, RN, BSN  
Chief Nurse Executive

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Clemente Estrera, MD  
Medical Director