



September 4, 2020

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national emergency concerning the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. Since then, you and your loved ones have been separated in accordance with guidelines from federal, state and local health agencies, as well as our own policies and protocols designed to provide the safest environment for your family member. We understand that separation from loved ones is stressful and unpleasant for everyone concerned.

Governor McMaster has lifted certain state restrictions and skilled nursing centers can now allow limited outdoor visitation. With this state directive, we are developing a system to permit certain in-person outdoor visits at our facilities. Once in place, our new limited outdoor visiting rules and procedures will maintain our commitment to do what we can to reduce the risks of COVID-19 infection to our residents, staff and visitors.

We understand that this news is exciting, and you are eager to visit your loved ones as soon as possible.

However, the restrictions on the limited outdoor visitation program directed by the state are complex, and as such, we ask for your patience and understanding as we make the necessary preparations. Before we can offer limited outdoor visitation, we must meet the following criteria:

- Screening of residents for any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection with documentation is occurring at least daily and for staff at the start of each shift.
- Facility has adequate staffing and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Facility must provide their written plan for limited outdoor visitation to DHEC's Healthcare Quality division.
- There have been **no cases** among staff and residents identified in the facility within the last **14 days**.
- Testing must be occurring per CMS requirements before visitation may begin at the facility.

Visitation will be temporarily suspended if any of the following occurs:

- If **one or more** cases are identified in residents and/or staff members, visitation must be suspended until CMS testing protocols are completed. Visitation may resume if fewer than three total cases have been identified.
- If **three or more** cases are identified in staff members and/or residents within a 14 day period, visitation must be suspended. Visitation may resume 14 days after the identification of the last case.

Our residents and visitors must meet multiple criteria for limited outdoor visitation. We will post the guidelines for limited outdoor visitation on our facility website. We are happy that after such a long period of time, we will be able to provide limited visitation to our residents and their family members. Our goal is to allow visitations in the safest manner possible. We therefore ask that, in the best interests of your loved ones and the staff that have been diligently caring for them, you respect all the protocols that will be in place. We will keep you informed as the process unfolds, and will provide more details about the days, times and other safety rules which will be in place to make these visits as comfortable and safe as possible for everyone. If you have any questions please reach out to Katherine Joy, Administrator.

Read the [S.C Department of Health and Environmental Control's updated guidelines for outdoor visitation](#).