



## Department of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, Director

March 16, 2020

Dear Ohio Long-Term Care Facility Administrators,

As Ohio reports more positive cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is increasingly important that we continue to take steps to prevent its spread.

On March 13, 2020, Director of Health Dr. Amy Acton issued an amended order that was sent out through EIDC. The Order limits access to nursing homes to those personnel who are absolutely necessary for the operation of the home, including staff, contracted and emergency healthcare providers, contractors conducting critical on-site maintenance, and governmental representatives and regulators and their contractors. Long-term care facilities should screen these personnel in accordance with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Ohio Department of Health.

After screening, necessary personnel should be permitted to enter the building if they do not meet the criteria for exclusion under the guidance. This includes contracted healthcare providers like hospice workers who may need to provide care to a resident multiple times daily. It is important that the healthcare needs of your residents continue to be met during this critical time.

While the amended order restricts normal visitation to residents, it makes an exception for end-of life situations. This includes any resident who is receiving hospice care, not just a resident who is facing imminent death. The facility should screen visitors prior to entry and restrict any visitor who does not pass screening. There are additional recommendations for visitors in the most recent CMS guidance. I recommend that residential care facilities look to the CMS guidance to help develop best practices also. The guidance can be found on the CMS website at <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurvey/certificationgeninfo/policy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-nursing-homes-revised>.

As previously stated, survey staff will expect to be screened prior to admission to nursing homes and residential care facilities. The Department continues to monitor the health of our staff. The Department is awaiting guidance from CMS regarding survey activities and will be complying with any updated guidance.

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The State of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of ADA Services.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau of Survey and Certification at (614) 752-9524.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Sandholdt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rebecca Sandholdt  
Chief, Bureau of Survey & Certification