**COVID-19 OUTDOOR VISITATION: SAMPLE STATEMENT & MESSAGES**

***Effective July 20, 2020***

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

The safety and health of our residents and staff has guided our work throughout the pandemic. We feel keenly the impact of social isolation on our residents’ wellbeing and are pleased to be able to offer the option of outdoor visits as the next best step in reconnecting residents with their loved ones. Outdoor visits allow us to carefully balance the need to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our setting with the strong desire for more meaningful connection between residents and their loved ones.

**Reduce social isolation.**

* One of the most unfortunate and saddest parts of this global health pandemic is the barriers we had to place per state and federal guidelines on families and friends in order protect our residents, who are among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, and our staff.
* We recognize the impact that social isolation can have on our residents’ health and well-being and are doing our best to take the appropriate steps based on federal and state guidelines to safely expand opportunities for engagement and connection.
* Outdoor visits are the next best step to safely reconnect family members and their loved ones while we remain diligent in our efforts to prevent and limit the transmission of this virus.
* While this is an exciting and welcomed step forward, we are looking forward to the day we can open our doors once again to families, visitors and volunteers. We continue to take actionable steps and make plans for that day.
* Please know that we will also continue to help you connect with your loved one through alternative means such as telephone, video chat, email or social media.

**Protect people. Provide access.**

* The risk of COVID-19 transmission in long-term settings and the need for visits with families and friends can be safely and appropriately balanced.
* Our goal in this next phase of our visitation policy is to protect our residents and staff as we create opportunities for more meaningful connection for our residents through outdoor visits.
* We are taking all the necessary, required measures to protect our residents and staff while we provide a safe space for socialization and visitation. We are following the [**guidance provided by the Ohio Department of Health**](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Fourth-Amended-Directors-Order-Nursing-Homes.pdf)on requirements for visitation, which includes screening, PPE, infection control and staffing.
* Please be patient as we roll out this next phase in visitation. As the virus is still being transmitted throughout our state, we may need to change visitation options based on a resident’s status of COVID-19 and the overall status of COVID-19 in our setting. We may also need to limit outdoor visitation due to weather.

**Safety is a shared responsibility.**

* We all have a role in protecting our community and each other from this virus.
* The parameters for outdoor visitation that we must follow is based on [**guidance from the Ohio Department of Health.**](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Fourth-Amended-Directors-Order-Nursing-Homes.pdf)
* All visitors must comply with our screening protocols and other infection control measures when they visit their loved one. Please review our [**Outdoor Visit Risk Acknowledgement, Restrictions and Instructions Forms**](http://www.leadingageohio.org/aws/LAO/asset_manager/get_file/471402) before scheduling an outdoor visit.
* You are a partner in helping protect our community from this virus. We ask that you understand the requirements and procedures we have put in place based on state and federal guidance and work with us as partners in caregiving to abide by them.