



Department of Health

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

MARY T. BASSETT, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

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Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner

Dear Visitor,

As part of our efforts to keep everyone safe, we expect everyone, visitors, residents, and staff, to follow the Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention. These include:

1. Screening everyone prior to entering (with limited exceptions, such as Emergency Medical Transport). Anyone with a current positive COVID-19 test, symptoms of COVID-19, or meets criteria for quarantine should not visit.
2. While the CDC COVID-19 Community Transmission Level remains Substantial or High, everyone must wear a face mask (covering mouth and nose) with few exceptions, listed below. Face masks will be provided by the Home, as needed.
3. Other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as a face shield, may also be worn by visitors. These will be provided by Security and by requesting them from staff. If additional PPE is required, visitors will be notified upon entry.
4. Visitors must adhere to the signage throughout the Home which will include information about COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, and guidance on the use of face masks and other infection control related information.
5. High touch surfaces continue to be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
6. Cohorting of residents, who test positive with COVID-19, is no longer required, but may occur as determined by the Home's Infection Prevention and Control Committee (for example, a separate area may be dedicated to COVID-19 care).
7. Visitors will be screened and tested prior to visiting in accordance with current guidelines.
8. Physical distancing of at least six feet between people whenever possible.
9. Everyone should maintain proper hand hygiene (alcohol-based hand sanitizers are generally acceptable).

Residents currently on transmission-based precautions (TBP) or quarantine can still receive visitors. Due to the risk of transmission, visitors of residents with TBP must follow the signs on the resident room doors, and:

1. Be aware that there exists the potential risk of being exposed during the visit,
2. The resident should wear a well-fitting face mask (if tolerated),
3. The Home may require use of other appropriate PPE, if available, for the visit, and
4. Resident and visitors must wear all required PPE when staff are in the resident's room.

Visitation Process

1. When you come into the Home to visit, check in at the Security Desk and either self-test or provide an attestation of outside test results. Acceptable proof of outside tests is either a rapid test completed within one day or a PCR test done within two days of the visit.
2. Anyone who has a current positive COVID-19 test, symptoms of COVID-19, or meets current criteria for COVID quarantine should not visit.
3. Go directly to the resident's room or the designated visitation area. Do not walk around the hallways or different common areas of the Home.
 - a. Visitors are allowed to participate with the resident in the Home's Recreational (Activities) programs when the Home is not in outbreak status.
 - b. At least 6 feet physical distancing between others whenever possible.
4. If the resident (or representative) and the visitor are aware of the risks and adhere to the core principles of infection prevention:
 - a. You may choose not to wear a face mask and to have physical contact while in the resident's room.
 - b. Visitors may eat with a resident (in the resident's room or an assigned common area).
5. Visitors are required to always wear face masks when within 6 feet of other residents, visitors, and any staff member including health care personnel, regardless of vaccination status.
6. Upon ending a visit, please walk directly to the lobby exit.

Visitation During an Outbreak Investigation

An outbreak investigation begins when a new nursing home onset of COVID-19 occurs – meaning a new facility-acquired case of COVID-19 among residents or staff. Visitors will be informed via the Home's website and/or posted signs. While it is safer not to enter the Home during an outbreak investigation, you are permitted to visit but must adhere to the Core Principles of Infection Prevention. If you choose to visit during an outbreak investigation period, you will be required to wear a face mask (and face shield, if required) during visits, regardless of vaccination status and visits will take place in the resident's room as per guidelines.

Outdoor Visitation

Weather permitting, outdoor visitation will be available for individuals preferring to be outside. If the resident (or representative) and the visitor are aware of the risks and adhere to the core principles of infection prevention, one or both of you may choose not to wear a face mask and to have physical contact, while remaining at least 6 feet from others.

Vaccination and Booster Status

If you are unvaccinated or have not received a booster, we strongly recommend that you reconsider this. Unvaccinated persons are at the greatest risk and most COVID-19 hospitalizations and death happen among those who are unvaccinated.

Testing

All visitors must have a negative COVID-19 test in addition to passing the standard screening questions. You may choose one of the following options:

1. Self-test here at the Veterans Home in the lobby.
 - You will have to sign a self-attestation form confirming your results.
2. Bring proof of a negative test from your home or from another site.
 - You will have to sign a self-attestation form confirming that you have done a test outside the Home (that resulted in a negative).
 - You must verify receiving a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result either
 - Within one day prior to visitation using an antigen (rapid) test or
 - Within two days prior to visitation using a NAAT (e.g. PCR) test.

If you did not complete a test outside the Home, then the Security Department will issue you a rapid swab kit that you must complete in the lobby at one of the designated areas.

Risks

There are still risks associated with visitation and COVID-19. However, these risks are reduced by adhering to the Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention. Since visitors, resident, or their representative are aware of the risks associated with visitation, and the visit occurs in a manner that does not place other residents at risk (e.g., in the resident's room or in common areas outside the Home), the resident will be allowed to receive visitors as he/she chooses.

Residents may deny or withdraw consent for a visit at any time.

Thank you for working together with us for the safety of your loved ones and everyone here at the New York State Veterans Home at Oxford.

Sincerely,

Kurt D. Apthorpe

Kurt D. Apthorpe, MBA, LNHA, CNHA

Administrator

NYS Veterans Home at Oxford

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