

FAQ: Visitors to LTC Facilities During the Pandemic

As Missouri grapples with the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis, protecting long-term care residents has become a top priority. Unfortunately, for the near future, this includes significantly altering policies regarding visitors. Here is what you need to know regarding these temporary restrictions:

Q: Can I visit my loved one (friend or family) in an LTC Facility?

A: No, unless your loved one is in the advanced stages of hospice care and is actively passing away, visits of any kind from friends, immediate family, spouses, etc. are NOT currently permitted. Emergent hospice visits are permitted on a case-by-case basis and will likely involve strict precautions to reduce potential spread to other residents.

Q: Who can enter an LTC facility?

A: At this time, ONLY facility staff and EMT crew members are permitted to enter an LTC facility. NO visitors, non-emergency personnel, or vendors may enter.

Q: Can a resident leave the facility?

A: Technically, yes, a resident is permitted to leave. However, the resident will be permitted to return ONLY if the absence was for an urgent medical necessity. Any resident who leaves without urgent medical needs will be considered Against Medical Advice (AMA) and will NOT be permitted back into the residence. Please check with your Administrator for your facility's specific policies.

Q: If physical visits are not possible, how can I stay connected with my loved one?

A: Reducing the negative effects of social isolation during quarantine is incredibly important. While physical meetings with your loved one in LTC are not possible at this time, there are still ways to show love and support. Phone calls are an excellent and safe way to keep in touch. FaceTime, Skype, WhatsApp, and other video chatting technologies can help simulate face-to-face meeting and provide some comfort to both family and resident. As of now, residents may still receive mail. Hand-written letters, greeting cards, and photos can help your loved one feel connected. Further, photos and hand-written notes may help those with dementia retain memory while quarantined.

Q: Can the Ombudsman Program still advocate for the needs of my loved one in LTC?

A: YES! Please note that the VOYCE office is closed and the Ombudsmen will not be making regular visits. However, Regional Ombudsmen can be reached via email or phone to discuss your care needs during this uncertain time.

Please reach out to VOYCE if you have any questions about resident rights during this time! Our staff can be reached at (314) 918-8222 or toll free at (866) 918-8222.