****

**Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Protocol for In-Person Visits**

Due to the reduced number of COVID cases, Regional Ombudsman should resume visits to all facilities, even if the facility has a known positive COVID-19 case. If the facility has a COVID wing, in-person visits should be avoided on the COVID wing.

**NOTE: Volunteer Ombudsman** can use personal discretion to decide if they want to visit a facility that has active COVID. Volunteers should keep their Regional Ombudsman informed if they are visiting or not due to COVID in the facility.

**PREPARATION FOR VISITS:**

* Evaluate personal health for symptoms of sickness, including monitoring of temperature. If not feeling well, the Ombudsman should not visit. This includes all illnesses (not just COVID).
* If an Ombudsman knows he/she has been in contact with a positive case or suspect case or is having symptoms he/she shall immediately inform the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (or Regional Ombudsman if a Volunteer). The Ombudsman will suspend all visits until evaluation and all recommendations have been completed. If medical advice is needed, they may also need to contact their health care provider.

**NOTE**: Ombudsman are not allowed to be tested at the facility.

**MASKING UPDATE:**

* Ombudsman are no longer required to wear masks while conducting facility visits except in the following situations:
* The facility policy requires masking
* The facility has an outbreak of COVID, flu or other illness
* The resident requests you wear a mask
* You prefer to wear a mask for best practice or underlying health concerns

**ENTRY INTO FACILITY:**

* If the facility has residents currently positive for COVID-19 and they want to talk with the Ombudsman, it should be arranged by phone or device for a virtual visit.
* If required, complete a COVID-19 screening with facility staff upon entry into the facility.
* Only bring necessary items into the facility to reduce spreading germs.

* Use hand hygiene – either the use of hand sanitizer or hand washing for at least 20 seconds – before and after entry into each facility and each resident room.
* For notetaking use your own pen and do not lay on surfaces at the facility.
* Avoid sitting on the beds or chairs in the facility and overall avoid contact with surfaces in the facility.
* Place your business card, pamphlets or other information on a hard surface, instead of handing it to someone to limit hand-to-hand contact.