

# Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Updated: 09/04/2020

Updates to questions below are marked with \*\*\*, and changes to responses are in **bold** type.

Please consult the Centers for Disease Control (CDC - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS - [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov)) for current information on this evolving situation or additional questions beyond this document.

**CURRENT RESTRICTION STATUS:** At this time, no visitors are permitted to enter the center. Accommodation will be made only for visitors to residents who are at end of life and in the state of actively dying or compassionate care visits. Any permitted visitors will be screened and subject to additional protocol, including confining visitation to the resident room only.

## New Information as of 09/04/2020

- **What is your process for testing residents, staff, and others (contractors, consultants, volunteers) who are permitted to enter the center?**

In addition to the health screening questions required for entry to a Villa center, CMS has issued further directives for evaluating the health of individuals accessing a health care facility which include regular testing based on certain parameters. The parameters and frequency have been set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services. All Villa centers will follow their local and state health department guidelines, as well as CMS guidelines, related to testing, documenting, and reporting.



## COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) - GENERAL INFORMATION

- **What measures does the center have in place to minimize the potential impact of the COVID-19?**

At this time, visitors are restricted from entering the center, except for those individuals visiting hospice patients in the active stages of death or compassionate care visits, who will be screened prior to admission and restricted to resident rooms only. Based on up to the minute direction from the CDC, CMS, and the state Health Department, the center will update its staff, residents, visitors, vendors and others regarding its current practice for any restriction to access to the facility through this notice. Individuals are also encouraged to call the center to verify whether any current restrictions are in place in advance of traveling to the center.

For any individuals permitted access to the center for visitation, the center is actively screening all visitors and admittees who enter to ensure that only visitors who do not have a fever, have not had any potential exposure to COVID-19, have not experienced symptoms (cough, sore throat, respiratory distress), have not traveled internationally or domestically via air within last 14 days, or who not have taken a cruise within the last 14 days are permitted access to resident room only. For any individuals not barred from admission based on these factors, center staff will take and document the temperatures of all persons entering the center. Anyone with a fever will be denied access, and anyone who develops a fever at any time during their time in the center will be asked to leave. As of 4/2/2020, CMS requires everyone entering a long-term care facility to wear a face mask while in the center. We all wish to keep our residents, visitors and staff protected, and these measures are designed for that purpose.

Beginning June 17, 2020, any Villa consultant who has taken a cruise or has engaged in air travel, either internationally or domestically, will NOT be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon his or her return. However, any Villa consultant who has traveled to a location where COVID-19 cases are significant based on CDC Guidelines, may be asked to wear a N-95 respirator upon his or her return to work.

All staff members who enter any Villa center are screened upon entry, and any staff member exhibiting a fever or any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are not permitted into the center. All employees are strongly encouraged, but not required to postpone any planned travel.

Visitors, residents, and staff are expected to observe proper infection control protocol, including proper hand washing or the use of alcohol based hand sanitizers, covering their mouth when coughing or their nose when sneezing, maintaining safe distance from others (ideally keeping a separation of at least 6 feet), and minimizing direct contact with others. Center staff is monitoring residents for any signs or symptoms consistent with the COVID-19 virus, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. According to the CDC, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

- **Will this center accept patients from hospitals with confirmed case(s) of COVID-19?**

Guidance from the American Health Care Association (AHCA) released on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 stated, "...unless a person is tested for COVID-19 and negative before admitting them to your building, you should assume the person has COVID-19 regardless of their having or not having symptoms." Beginning March 31<sup>st</sup>, all Villa centers will consider this guidance in addition to staffing and personal protective equipment (PPE) levels before deciding to admit a resident regardless of the hospital from which they were discharged. Ideally, each center will have the option to work with the referral source to secure testing for any potential placement, so the center is able to work with known facts. Where testing is not available or where results may not be available until after discharge from the hospital, placement will be referred to a center with COVID-19 positive results. Any such placement may be temporary, with discharge planning taking desired placement into account and facilitating transfer when possible.

For any resident who is returning to the center after a hospital stay, explanation is provided herein (see page 7). Upon return, the resident will be placed in an appropriate location based on their current condition and needs. Appropriate precautionary measures will be implemented based on their return evaluation.



- **What PPE (personal protective equipment) does the center have available to protect against COVID-19?**

Each center has a supply of the following types of PPE: gowns, face masks, N95 masks, face shields, gloves, and protective eyewear. The use of any PPE is dictated by the presence of COVID-19, the presence of signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or required by federal or state mandate. As of 4/2/2020, CMS requires all long-term care personnel to wear a face mask while in the center. If COVID-19 is suspected in the center, "Because of the higher risk of unrecognized infection among residents, universal use of all recommended PPE for the care of all residents on the affected unit (or facility-wide depending on the situation) is recommended when even a single case among residents or HCP is newly identified in the facility; this could also be considered when there is sustained transmission in the community," (CDC, Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes, 06.25.2020.)

When possible, all long-term care facility residents, whether they have COVID-19 symptoms or not, should cover their noses and mouths when staff are in their room. Residents can use tissues, cloth, or non-medical masks when available. Residents should not use medical face masks unless they are COVID-19 positive or assumed to be COVID-19 positive.

- **What is advance care planning and how important is it?**

Advance care planning is a process by which residents and other appropriate parties (loved ones, advisors, clinicians, etc.) discuss the residents' care goals and values specific to end of life care including the use of life-sustaining treatments such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or mechanical ventilation.

Advance care planning can be difficult, regardless of the circumstances. It is more important than ever to have conversations with your loved ones around their values and goals regarding their care and their wishes for end of life considerations. In our current state, it is also important to consider the worldwide resource scarcity and the community's crisis capacity when making these decisions, and what they may mean for the resident. For example, 911 response teams in Michigan have already informed at least one center that they will not come to the center in response to a 911 call as they have no hospital available to accept any patient, regardless of the severity of the patient's needs.

Center staff may contact our residents or designee in an effort to ensure the care team can support the values and goals of the advance care plan. We encourage residents and designees to speak with family, spiritual advisors, and physicians throughout this process. Additionally, we ask you to support your loved ones in this process. Center staff can provide additional information regarding code status (i.e. transitioning from full code to DNR), but if you wish to receive further advice regarding other advance directives (e.g. living will) we recommend consulting an attorney specializing in this area.

- **When can I visit my loved one at the center?**

At this time, visitors are restricted from entering the center, except for those individuals visiting hospice patients in the active stages of death or compassionate care visits, who will be screened prior to admission and restricted to resident rooms only.

Some states are endorsing outdoor and window visits as a way for residents to connect with loved ones, while maintaining safety and infection prevention. All Villa centers will follow their state health department guidelines, as well as CMS guidelines. Each center has a different layout requiring site-specific approach to outdoor visits and window visits. Additionally, the safety of residents and staff will be considered in determining the centers potential for these visits. Please contact the center directly to learn more about their plan for visits and if possible, to schedule.

In the meantime, there is no restriction to phone calls and if you have already established a way to communicate with your loved one in the center using cell phones or the center phones, please continue to call and stay connected. Additionally, please visit [www.villahc.com](http://www.villahc.com) to schedule a Villa Video Visit.



- **How can I find out more about the how many cases of COVID-19 are in the center?**

CMS requires every skilled nursing center to provide updates to the CDC. (Details of the CMS reporting requirement can be found starting on page 179 of the [CMS Final Rule](#).) In addition to providing notification to the CDC in accordance with CMS requirements, each Villa center also provides daily updates posted on its website for the benefit of its residents, their representatives and families, and staff. All parties may easily access this information by visiting the COVID-19 information section of Villa's website at [www.villahc.com/COVID](http://www.villahc.com/COVID). If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Villa center directly.

### **ENTRANCE TO CENTER/RESTRICTIONS**

- **Is the center prohibiting anyone from entering?**

Yes, at this time, visitors are not permitted to the center. Accommodations will be made for those residents who are actively dying or compassionate care situations, and visitors to those residents will be screened and subject to protection measures.

- **How will people enter and exit the center?**

All residents, staff, visitors, health professionals and vendors are required to enter and exit through the center's main entrance only. Only those individuals deemed essential by the center will be permitted access. Entrance and exit from any other point of access is prohibited. Signs are posted on each door for guidance. Please observe them for guidance.

- **Has the center imposed any time restrictions on entrance to the center?**

Once the current visitor restrictions are modified, access to the center is permitted twenty-four hours per day through the main entrance only. However, the main entrance will be locked at all times, and anyone desiring to enter the facility must ring the buzzer to request access. Access to the facility lobby may be restricted, as stated elsewhere herein.

- **If I have a loved one in the center, what is the best way to communicate with them?**

There is no restriction to phone calls and if you have already established a way to communicate with your loved one in the center using cell phones or the center phones, please continue to call and stay connected. Additionally, please visit [www.villahc.com](http://www.villahc.com) to schedule a Villa Video Visit.

- **For anyone eighteen years of age or older, what is required by the center for access?**

Upon entering, all individuals must immediately sign in with a center designee, answering all required questions. In addition, a center designee will screen each individual to verify that the individual does not currently have a fever or any history of potential exposure to COVID-19 that would prevent the individual from entering. Individuals who clear the initial screen will be required to either wash their hands at entry, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer prior to access to resident areas. Individuals are expected to restrict their visit to resident room only.

- **Does this entrance screening apply to resident visitors only?**

No, any individual who enters the center must comply with this process. This includes all residents, visitors, center staff, medical professionals, vendors, and representatives of state and federal agencies.



- **If I have been on a cruise in the last fourteen days, can I visit with my loved one in the center?**

No. Visitors who have been on a cruise in the last fourteen days will be asked to defer their visit to a later date to ensure that they are not currently asymptomatic. Beginning June 17, 2020, any Villa consultant who has taken a cruise or has engaged in air travel, either internationally or domestically, will NOT be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon his or her return. However, any Villa consultant who has traveled to a location where COVID-19 cases are significant based on CDC Guidelines, may be asked to wear a N-95 respirator upon his or her return to work.

- **What is a fever?**

According to CDC guidance, a fever is defined as a body temperature of 100.0° F or above, without the use of fever mitigating medication (e.g. Tylenol or Motrin). If you have any concerns, please act in the interest of public safety and defer your visit.

### **WITHIN THE CENTER**

- **What changes can I expect to see around the center?**

Signs will be posted to provide guidance on the appropriate door for entrance and exit. Signage will be posted on all other doors to advise as to limitation of use during this time. Any doors between common areas and resident rooms should remain closed, and all fire doors will remain closed. When appropriate based on temperatures and weather conditions, windows should be opened to promote fresh air circulation (should not be opened more than 2" (two inches)). Elevator use will be minimized, and residents will be directed to confine their presence to their assigned room or unit. You can also expect to see informational postings regarding proper handwashing techniques and information regarding COVID-19.

Additionally, staff will maintain consistent assignments within the center, and all current programs with educational institutions will be suspended. Staff may also direct residents and visitors to alternative locations for limited periods of times when necessary to maintain appropriate "social distance."

Finally, if a resident, his or her family or representative requests transfer out of the center to the hospital setting for non-emergent purposes, staff will contact the local EMS provider to visit the center for purposes of evaluating the resident for the necessity of transport. If EMS does not deem the resident appropriate for transport, then the resident will remain in the center. It is always the intent of the center to minimize the exposure of any resident to a potentially hazardous environment and to minimize transfer trauma. This remains unchanged, but during this time of heightened surveillance, the center priority to treat in place whenever possible is paramount. Center staff will communicate with the resident's physician to confirm all treatment plans based on the resident's condition.

- **What more is the center staff doing now to monitor residents?**

During this period of increased surveillance, center staff is monitoring vitals per shift, and will continue observation for changes in condition related to the presentation of any symptoms of COVID-19.

- **Will communal dining continue for my loved one in the center?**

In centers where dining areas are large enough to accommodate the positioning of residents to maintain appropriate social distance (6 feet apart), dining practices will change from communal dining to cohort dining. Any resident who presents with signs or symptoms of any condition that may pose a risk to other residents or staff would not be included. However, the practice of cohort dining does permit staff members to provide supervision, assistance and encouragement to those residents requiring such support. Many centers may adjust dining practices to in-room dining if installing cohort dining practices safely is not possible, or where residents prefer to eat in their room.



- **Are loved ones of residents permitted to receive meals from the center?**

The center's meal service is unchanged due to this situation.

- **What if I am scheduled to attend a care conference for my loved one?**

The center will proceed with all scheduled care conferences by phone. If video conference is preferred, attendees may contact the center for arrangements.

- **How will the center accommodate the needs of residents to obtain sundry items?**

For residents who typically access other units within the center for vending machine products, designated staff will purchase those items at the request and expense of the resident, eliminating the need for residents to leave their respective units. For residents who are permitted by their physician to leave the center to purchase items at outside vendors, the center will complete errand trips as needed to purchase items at the residents' request and expense. Center staff will work with its residents and their families and representatives to accommodate their requests.

- **Will the center continue to host potlucks and resident birthday celebrations?**

All shared food experiences are suspended. Modified birthday and holiday celebrations will continue to minimize assembly of residents, guests, and staff. The center may host smaller celebrations on each unit or individual resident celebrations to honor residents and their milestones while minimizing the potential exposure of attendees.

- **Will the center conduct resident council meetings as scheduled?**

Center leadership will coordinate with the resident council president regarding the best alternate option for this event, ensuring all residents retain the opportunity to present and discuss grievances, concerns, and questions. This may include conducting meetings by units, wings, or floors. Regardless of the agreed upon meeting modification, the center will comply with all regulatory requirements by providing information and support to all residents.

- **Will center staff continue to conduct regularly scheduled meetings?**

Clinical startup and stand down will continue. Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) meetings will proceed as scheduled. However, all outside attendees, other than the center's Medical Director, are encouraged to attend by phone, video conference, or skype/FaceTime. The center leadership will conduct all-staff meetings by unit. Regional leadership meetings should be conducted via telephone or teleconference.

- **Will Villa Healthcare team members continue to visit the center?**

All essential consulting team members (individuals who support and assist the center operations and care providers) will continue to support their respective centers. They will be screened upon entrance and are directed to stay home if symptoms warrant. Consulting team members are encouraged to work remotely when possible.

- **Will the center continue to conduct fire and other safety drills?**

Yes. The center will conduct all drills as scheduled. All exits are available and operational during drills only. Upon completion of any drill, all individuals must re-enter the center through the main entrance. At all other times, individuals will only use the main entrance to enter and exit the building.



- **If a resident experiences a room change, and is COVID-19 positive, how long will the resident's belongings be quarantined before arriving in their newly assigned room?**

In the event a resident with COVID-19 needs to change rooms, the resident's belongings will be quarantined for a period of three days before being delivered to the resident's newly assigned room. We know that this delay can be disruptive, though it is our best approach to infection control for personal items, given the information provided by the CDC and other medical experts.

- **Are smokers permitted to continue smoking in compliance with center protocol?**

Yes, with the exception of any resident on a fourteen day quarantine. Existing rules remain in place regarding the appropriate location for smoking, the use of protective equipment when required, and the proper disposal and storage of smoking products. However, during this time, the center will create a smoking plan by unit for implementation during this time of increased surveillance. Residents who are asymptomatic will be permitted to smoke in designated smoking areas at set times in small groups with appropriate social distancing and individual use of smoking materials. For any resident with symptoms of acute respiratory illness, they will have designated times when smoking will be permitted in isolation to other residents. Those residents will be masked at all times for transportation to and from the smoking area. Residents, with or without the accompaniment of staff (as required by their individual smoking plan), will be directed to the sole smoking area entrance designated by the center during this time.

Conversely, all visitors, staff and guests are required to enter and exit the center for any reason, including smoking breaks, through the main entrance. No visitor, staff or guest should use any other door for exit or entrance for access to smoking areas.

- **How will I know when it is safe for my loved one to discharge from the Villa center?**

Every situation is different. The staff at all Villa centers are committed to working with our residents and their loved ones to identify safe discharge goals, create a plan to achieve them, and monitor progress towards them. This progress should not be halted or reversed upon discharge. This has always been true and has not changed.

However, the environment residents are discharged into has changed. In addition to their home environment and ability to continue to receive the care they need, we now must consider how local, state, and federal executive orders may play a role. For example, they may mandate different standards regarding human to human contact (e.g. social distancing), operation of businesses (e.g. grocery store hours), and public expectations (e.g. covering of nose and mouth). The impact this may have on our resident's quality of life and psychosocial wellbeing outside of the center is unknown and should be considered as part of the discharge planning process. In many situations, the safest place for residents may be in our center where they can safely interact with others, receive all their meals, live in a clean environment, and receive on-site and available care, among other areas which will contribute to their quality of life and psychosocial wellbeing.

The center staff will use the care conference process to have safe discharge planning conversations. All care conferences will take place by phone, video conference, or skype/FaceTime.

- **If employee punch-ins are late due to the screening process, what do they do?**

We want all employees to be paid for the scheduled shift, if the punch-in will be after the shift start time, please provide the employee the Time Clock Adjustment Form and forward the completed form to the center HR team member or designee to enter the punch in time.



- **Will pet visits continue at the center?**

Right now, there is conflicting information regarding the safety of pets and their ability to carry and contract the virus. Therefore, we are asking centers to suspend all pet visits until we can locate specific evidence on this topic. We know people love pets and they bring a dimension to the lives of many that is indescribable. When there is greater clarity regarding this subject, we will provide an update.

### **OUT OF CENTER VISITS AND APPOINTMENTS**

- **Will organized group resident outings continue as scheduled?**

All group outings are suspended at this time in an effort to minimize the potential for exposure in large crowds. Center staff will accommodate resident requests for items that must be purchased off site.

- **Are residents permitted to leave the facility for medical appointments?**

Residents are encouraged to re-schedule all non-critical or routine appointments in order to minimize exposure to group settings. For all essential or critical appointments, residents are permitted to leave the center. However, residents are encouraged to speak with their outside providers to determine what measures providers are taking to minimize the potential for exposure in their office setting. All residents will be screened upon re-entry to the center.

- **If a resident is sent to the hospital where patients have tested COVID-19 positive, will the resident be permitted to return to the center?**

Yes. Based on state directives, the resident must be permitted to return to their home center, regardless of COVID-19 status. We appreciate that this directive from the states may result in the introduction of COVID-19 to a center that has not previously experienced a COVID-19 positive test result or does not currently have anyone in the center who is COVID-19 positive. Each center will continue all necessary infection control, screening, and monitoring practices intended to minimize the potential for exposure to COVID-19 and to identify any potential signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in both the center resident population and staff.

- **Will non-urgent medical services (dentist, podiatrist, etc.) continue monthly?**

The center is working with all outside service providers to determine if their visits to the center are essential at this time. Whenever non-essential services can be deferred, the center is coordinating the continuation of said services to a later date.

- **What is the process for residents who need to leave the building for urgent medical treatment?**

The center will continue its existing practice of working with ambulance services to transport residents to and from the hospital for necessary care and treatment.

- **Will the center allow residents who leave against medical advice (AMA) to return to the center?**

No. Any resident who leaves the facility AMA would be required to return the hospital for assessment, evaluation and the creation of physician orders. The resident may be referred to the facility for consideration for re-admission.





## DELIVERIES

- **Will mail and packages still be delivered to the center?**

Yes. However, the center will only accept deliveries at the main entrance. The center will not permit mail carriers and commercial delivery drivers past the main entrance. Any outgoing mail or packages will be tendered at this location as well. Depending upon the item delivered and the packaging, there may be a slight delay (up to three days) in delivery to residents as we continue to investigate scientific evidence regarding the viability of the virus on different surfaces. Items may be held or wiped with bleach based products (when appropriate) to facilitate timely delivery.

- **How will the center receive deliveries of supplies and food?**

When possible, a center designee will receive all deliveries at the center's loading dock. Delivery personnel are not permitted to enter the center. Deliveries that are not appropriate for acceptance at the loading dock or requiring clinical verification of acceptance will be received at the main entrance.

- **Can I deliver a care package to my loved one since I am unable to visit?**

According to the CDC, "current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials." Until the CDC provides more definitive guidance, we will hold all packages that arrive for residents. We appreciate that the friends and family of our residents wish to let them know that they are thinking of them by delivering care packages to the center. We would encourage everyone to limit these deliveries until we have more scientific evidence about the virus. We are working diligently to minimize the potential of exposure of our residents and staff, and we appreciate your assistance in these efforts. We are happy to deliver mail, assist with coordinating calls and video visitations.

## FOR MINNESOTA CENTERS ONLY

- **Will the center's COVID-19 measures impact the ability of a resident to elect to use any therapeutic leave days?**

No. Any resident with therapeutic leave days can elect to use his or her benefit. However, any resident who chooses to take a therapeutic leave from the center must remain out of the center for a minimum of fourteen (14) days. Thereafter, the resident must test negative for COVID-19 before he or she may return to the center. Upon return, the resident will be placed temporarily on the limited admission unit for continued monitoring for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the resident shows no signs or symptoms after fourteen (14) days, then the resident would be permitted to move to an appropriate location within the center based on his or her functional need.

