# Frequently Asked Questions: Long Term Care & COVID-19

# Version date: September 30, 2020

1. **Are there any updated Executive Orders impacting long term care residents?**

Yes. The Governor issued Executive Order 2020-188 which replaces order 2020-174 which was set to expire today.

1. **Does this new order differ from the previous ones?**

The language is very similar. It restricts visitor entry into the home except when it is necessary for the provision of medical care, to support activities of daily living, or to exercise the power of attorney or court-appointed guardianship for an individual under the home’s care. It also states that entry is allowed if visiting an individual under the home’s care when there is a serious or critical condition or the person is in hospice care or are visiting under exigent circumstances or for the purpose of performing official governmental functions.

1. **What other provisions are included in the order?**

The order requires providers to conduct a health screening of all visitors.

Any staff or visitor must wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth when indoors or within six feet of another person.

It also requires providers to make best efforts to facilitate visitations by phone or other electronic communication platforms to the fullest extent possible, consistent with normal visitation policies.

1. **What type of settings are covered by this order?**

The same “residential care facilities” as before, including, but not limited to, homes for the aged, nursing homes, adult foster care homes, hospice facilities, substance abuse disorder residential facilities, independent living facilities, and assisted living facilities.

1. **Will MDHHS issue any additional exceptions under this order?**

We don’t know if MDHHS will issue any additional flexibilities. The order does state that the Director of DHHS may issue orders and directives to implement this order, including to specify exceptions to section 1 (entry into facility) of this order, and to specify additional evaluation criteria under section 2 (health screening of visitors) of this order.

1. **When does this new order expire?**

There is no expiration date on this order and it is effective immediately.

1. **Has the Governor issued a new order to replace EO 2020-169?**

As of 5 pm this evening, we have not yet seen an updated to Executive Order 2020-169 as this order expires today. This is the order that provides protections for resident returning home with families and against involuntary discharge for the purpose of non-payment. It requires homes to cohort residents and describes the placement options for people who are COVID positive. This order also cancels all communal dining and group activities.

1. **My mom is currently in an Assisted Living with dementia. I was wondering if AL's and Nursing Facilities are working on options to support in person visits as the weather gets colder? In general, are they considering "tents", heated possibly? Or indoor visits? Window visits just don't work for her.**

The Quality of Life workgroup of the Governor’s Nursing Home Preparedness Task Force made several recommendations and including suggestions in the implementation steps to address visitation when outdoor visits may no long term possible due to weather conditions or community spread of COVID. We continue to have discussions with MDHHS staff leading the COVID response about the need for creative solutions to visitation if we are faced with a second wave especially during flu season.

If your loved one is declining (like losing weight, reduced cognition, increased or new depression or agitation) due to the isolation, the resident may quality for a compassionate care visit per the MDHHS Epidemic Order issued on August 30. We encourage families to review the order, discuss the resident’s situation with the staff at the home, and pointing to this order, request an in-person visit. If your loved one is in a licensed home, you can also reach out to the local ombudsman for assistance.

1. **What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?**

First, let me state that I am not an infection control expert nor do I have a medical background. During the Joint Provider/Surveyor Training on Tuesday of this week, Dr. Bagdasarian, Senior Public Health Physician with MDHHS addressed this in her presentation. She provided a simple explanation of the difference between isolation and quarantine and the required infection prevention and control practices.

Isolation is when a person is confirmed to have COVID. The person is cohorted to mitigate the spread of COVID. The person will remain in isolation for 10 days, as this is how long a person can shed the virus. A person may still test positive for COVID after 10 days but is no longer considered contagious.

Quarantine is when a person has experienced a possible exposure to COVID. This could happen when they are out of the building for an appointment or make contact with a visitor. The person is cohorted into an area with other residents under observation for COVID. The person can test negative for COVID but still is quarantined as the virus has a 14-day incubation period.

1. **Is there any update on renewing State IDs or Driver’s Licenses for long term care residents?**

Our program met with two representatives from the Michigan Office of the Sate to discuss the renewal of State IDs and driver licenses at the Secretary of State. We also shared concerns about voting by long term care residents.

We had a long conversation about the current constraints on residents, including having to quarantine following an outside appointment. We shared many barriers to residents voting especially residents that may need physical assistance from family members when families are not allowed to enter the building, limited staff resources, possible resistance from staff if residents are considered to have reduced competency or have a court appointed guardian or activated power of attorney for healthcare.

The representatives are taking back a long list of questions and concerns on both of these issues. They indicated they will work to address renewal and voting with the Secretary of State. We will provide updates when they are available.

Thank you to those who brought these concerns to our attention as we have been so focused on resident visitation and isolation that the feedback helped us make these issues a higher priority for our program.