



June 26, 2020

Dear FutureCare Residents and Families:

Earlier this month, we explained that the State's nursing homes cannot follow the same protocol to reopening as many of the area businesses. Last week, the Governor and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) released specific guidance around the relaxation of restrictions for nursing homes, in a different phased approach than the State's "Roadmap to Recovery" plan.

According to the guidance, there are several restrictions that have been enacted at Maryland nursing homes that will need to remain in place for the foreseeable future and will not be relaxed at any phase of the reopening process. Several of those restrictions include:

- Continued strict screening of all staff and residents. Staff who screen positive will be excluded from work.
- Required use facemasks or cloth face coverings at all times for anyone inside the facility. If tolerated, residents should wear facemasks or cloth face coverings if they leave their rooms and when they are within 6 feet of anyone else, including staff members.
- Dedicated space for cohorting and managing care for residents with COVID-19 separate from the general population.
- Continued staff use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Before beginning the process to relax any COVID-19 restrictions, nursing home facilities must meet certain criteria, including not experiencing an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, defined as one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a resident or staff member, and an absence of any facility-onset COVID-19 cases within the last 14 days.

Different jurisdictions and different facilities within the same jurisdiction will likely be in different phases of relaxing restrictions. Please note that phase status or an outbreak are not indicators of the facility's performance or quality of care. We know this may be confusing and will work with you through each phase for our facility specifically. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Once the health authorities have deemed Maryland nursing homes have met the prerequisite criteria, we can begin the MDH's three-phased approach to relaxing restrictions.

Today, we are focused on entering Phase 1, and we will communicate with you as we move forward. Nursing homes cannot begin to enter Phase 1 until their city or county enters Stage 2 of Gov. Hogan's "Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery." This is beginning to happen throughout the state now.



Once cleared by the local and state health departments, Phase 1 for relaxing restrictions will include:

- Limited communal dining for residents who are not on quarantine or isolation and have tested negative for COVID-19, or who have recovered from COVID-19 and have met criteria for discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions.
- Limited, small gatherings (no more than 5 persons) for residents who are not on quarantine or isolation and have tested negative for COVID-19, or who have recovered from COVID-19 and have met criteria for discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions. Social distancing protocols must be followed, ensuring at least 6 feet of separation between people. Residents and staff must wear facemasks or cloth face coverings. Hand hygiene policies should be reinforced. Large group activities should continue to be restricted.
- Outdoor visitation is permitted when the following criteria are met: no more than 2 visitors at a time; social distancing and masking are maintained at all times between residents and visitors; and visits are monitored by facility staff to ensure social distancing and masking.

Per the MDH, in order to move from the pre-opening phase into Phase 1, nursing homes in Maryland must conduct weekly testing of its staff. This testing will be provided by the MDH through the month of July and we are awaiting further direction on when it will begin. As we prepare for the weekly testing, we are developing a system to facilitate outdoor visitation for those patients who are medically able to safely do so. Once outdoor visits are permitted by the MDH, we will provide you with information on the anticipated dates, hours, and the process. Please continue to bear with us and thank you for your patience, as the MDH may change timing or protocol throughout this process. We know you are excited to see your loved ones.

Under Phase 1, indoor visitation will continue to be prohibited except in end-of-life circumstances. Non-essential healthcare personnel and volunteers will also be restricted, and non-medically necessary trips outside of the facility will be avoided.

This new guidance brings us hope, and we are looking forward facilitating an outdoor visit with your loved ones soon. Know we continue to follow the prevention guidance from CMS and Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and work closely with the health departments and our hospital partners to keep our residents and community safe. As always, this is first priority.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Executive Director.

Sincerely,

FutureCare