

March 11, 2021

Dear Residents, Family Members, Friends, and or Responsible Persons,

I am delighted to report we continue to have no new positive COVID-19 test results for our residents or staff. Although a good many of our residents and staff have been fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19, there are many infection control and prevention efforts that must continue.

In light on the increased numbers of long-term care staff and residents being fully vaccinated\*, the long-awaited update to Nursing Home guidance with revised visitation recommendations was issued yesterday by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), issued this updated guidance for nursing homes to safely expand visitation options during the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency. Both CMS and CDC continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining infection prevention practices, given the continued risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Scheduled visitation at St. Anne Home can be conducted through different means based on the facility's structure, staff availability, and residents' needs. Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention include:

- Screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions about and observations of about signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status)
- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
- Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose)
- Social distancing at least six feet between persons
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene)
- Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
- Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated COVID-19 care)
- Resident and staff testing conducted as required by regulations

At St. Anne Home, these core principles must be adhered to at all times and we appreciate your cooperation. Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention will not be permitted to visit and will be asked to leave if these core principles are not followed during the visit. Following these core principles enable us to live our mission which is to protect the most vulnerable.

St. Anne Home has updated visitation procedures, which are consistent with the March 10, 2021 CMS recommendations, and are as follows.

1. Outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, visits should be held outdoors whenever practicable.
2. Scheduled indoor visitation will be allowed for residents (regardless of vaccination status), **except** for a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission. These scenarios include limiting indoor visitation for:
  - Unvaccinated residents, if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is greater than 10% and less than 70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;
  - Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions; or
  - Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine. Currently all residents newly admitted and residents who were out of the facility are quarantined during the first 14 days after admission or upon return to the facility.
3. Based on the size and layout of our buildings and outside tents and the number of staff available to screen visitors, all visits will be scheduled for a specific length of time **to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors.**
4. Visits can be scheduled through Mary Melko or her designee for Nursing Facility residents and Jennie Long or her designee for Villa Angela Personal Care Home residents.
5. No more than **three visitors** at one time per resident will be permitted in the heated and ventilated **outside tents** or **inside designated visitation areas.**
6. Visits for residents who share a room should not be conducted in the resident's room, if possible. For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, we will attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention listed above.

7. No more than **one visitor** at a time per resident will be permitted to visit in the resident's private room.
8. During indoor visitation, visitors will not be permitted to walk around different halls of the facility. Rather, they should go directly to the resident's room or designated visitation area.
9. Physical distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet between people) continues to be the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly if either party has not been fully vaccinated. However, **if the resident is fully vaccinated\***, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after. Regardless, visitors should physically distance from other residents and staff in the facility.
10. If there is an outbreak (i.e. a new COVID-19 case (one case) among resident or staff) the above visitation procedures will change. When a new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff is identified, a St. Anne Home will immediately begin outbreak testing and suspend all visitation (except that required under federal disability rights law), until at least one round of facility-wide testing is completed. Visitation can resume based on the specific criteria developed by CMS. Visitors will be notified about the potential for COVID-19 exposure in the facility (e.g., appropriate signage regarding current outbreaks), and adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, including effective hand hygiene and use of face-coverings.
11. Visitors will no longer be required to be tested as a condition of visitation. St. Anne Home has supply and capability to offer a rapid COVID-19 test for those visitors that are interested. The cost of this test is \$40.00. We encourage visitors to be tested when the Westmoreland County COVID-19 positivity rate is higher than 5%. Currently the 7-day positivity rate ending March 4, 2021 for Westmoreland County is 6.2%.
12. Visitors will not be required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 as a condition of visitation, this follows CMS recommendations. Although, it is interest of all to get vaccinated against COVID-19 so the process of opening back up can continue.

We are excited and thankful the government has issued updated guidance to safely expand visitation options at St. Anne Home during the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency. Closed window visits, and scheduled outdoor and indoor visits are available but we all must be careful to follow the above procedures. I recently was informed that another facility recently opened up and was offering added visitation options only to close down shortly afterward due to an outbreak occurring, so let's please work together and do our best to prevent this from occurring on our campus.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me and or Christy Kremer, Assistant Administrator with any questions or concerns you may have. Ann Donovan, Director of Nursing, Sandy Kellner, Assistant Director of Nursing, Tisha Hobaugh, Director of Social Services and Andy Porterfield, Infection Control Preventionist are also available to answer

any questions or concerns related to residents in our Nursing Facility and Jennie Long and Christy Kremer are available to answer with any questions or concerns you may have related to residents living in Villa Angela at St. Anne Home. Our entire care team is here to serve you and answer your questions. Thank you for your continued support and confidence in the care and services St. Anne Home provides to you and or your loved one.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Long, NHA, MHA, MBA  
President and CEO

*\*Fully vaccinated refers to a person who is  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the CDC's Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons.*