

**Essential Care Visitation Plan**  
(for Residential Facilities Nationwide)  
(Revised September 1, 2020)

Any Essential Care Visitation Plan should address the following components to assure the highest level of functioning for our loved ones in Nursing Homes.

It is vital that any **Essential Care Visitor Bill** address the following components of the care partnership that exists with residents and their families - and functions to address the Bill of Rights of all Residents in Long Term Care Facilities which have been violated by the non-visitation restriction in some nursing facilities for almost six months.

The **Essential Care Visitor Bill** should work to:

- 1) Address Nursing Home Reform 1987 Bill of Resident Rights
- 2) Require a liaison of the nursing facility to be dedicated to the Essential Care Visitor during the pandemic (to schedule visits, oversee traffic path to visiting area and/or private room of Resident)
- 3) Assert / Illuminate that while the compassionate care visitors for hospice have been allowed in since day one with no limitations of length of visit - this should also apply to the Essential Care Visitor - as per June 23, 2020 Federal Mandate which expands compassionate care visitor definition
- 4) The 14 - 28 Day of COVID-19 free of the Facility rule does **not** apply to an ECV - just like with Compassionate Care Visitors (have been allowed since day 1 regardless of COVID-19 presence) (see above)
- 5) Allow for Privacy (as per the Nursing Home Reform 1987 Bill of Rights)
- 6) Allows for a continuum of supplemental care for the resident to insure their highest level of functioning
- 7) Guestimate this is about 10% of a nursing home population (i.e. 498 residents - about 50 Essential Care Visitors)
- 8) Proof of COVID-19 negative test - just like a healthcare worker
- 9) Establish as a permanent care visiting category throughout the Pandemic
- 10) Recognize this visiting category is similar to the "hospital supportive person" that are allowed to see their loved ones in hospital settings
- 11) Differentiates between 'family visit' and an actual 'care visitor that was part of the care team pre-pandemic

## New York Bill for **Essential Care Visitor**

### **Designation and Definition of Essential Care Visitor**

Designation of an Essential Care Visitor is at the discretion of the Facility and upon agreement by the Resident ~ but automatically includes **Essential Care Visitors** of those residents who are non-verbal and have cognitive disability to not understand or advocate for their own care needs;

For residents who had Essential Care Visitors providing supplemental care support persons who were care partners to the care staff pre-pandemic visiting and augmenting care at least 4-6 x a week;

Facilities must establish policies and procedures for how to designate and utilize an Essential Care Visitor, but must immediately provide access within five days of this Bill's signature to appropriate and identify the Essential Care Visitor for appropriate residents (this determination will be made with resident's full care team - Director of Nursing, Social Worker, etc.);

This designation and agreement should outline what support will be provided by the **Essential Care Visitor**, if not already outlined in care plan of resident;

An **Essential Care Visitor** could be a family member or other outside caregiver (e.g., friend, volunteer, private personal caregiver) age 18 or older who has to have provided regular (at least 4x weekly) supplemental care and support to the resident before the pandemic;

Essential Care Visitors will schedule their visits weekly with care team which includes a designated **Essential Care Visitor Liaison** by the Facility - similarly to scheduling the window visits and video chats;

**Essential Care Visitor** will continue to provides care and support similar in nature as before the pandemic (supplemental care as endorsed by specialists and Drs., grooming, companionship, hydration, toileting, etc.),

### **Infection Control Protocol of an Essential Care Visitor**

A negative COVID-19 test is required before the **Essential Care Visitor** may be scheduled for care support (Negative result reflective within 5-7 days of the visit);

The **Essential Care Visitor** is subject to any regular testing required of facility staff (Weekly Basis);

**Essential Care Visitor** must wear a mask at all times while in the building and execute hand hygiene performed (other PPE may be required depending on where care is provided within facility);

If the support to be provided requires additional PPE, the **Essential Care Visitor** should meet with the facility's infection control lead to be instructed on proper use prior to providing support;

Facility should communicate clearly in writing the Infection Control Protocols to **Essential Care Visitor**;

Physical distancing must be maintained with staff and other residents while in building;

Sign-in upon arrival with screening as required of facility staff; agree to monitor their own symptoms and limit contacts outside the facility;

Designate a central point of entry where the **Essential Care Visitor** signs in and is actively screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the building, in the same manner as facility staff;

The facility should ensure hand sanitizing stations and alcohol-based hand rubs are accessible.

Restriction or revocation of **Essential Care Visitor** status if an individual who fails to follow physical distancing, PPE or other COVID-19 related rules ~ however, must be reported to the State by both parties - as lack of this supplemental care will contribute to and accelerate resident decline and restriction of care visitation is against the Residents Bill of Rights ~ also, the Facility must work in good faith to mediate and reinstate the restriction with the Essential Care Visitor to insure quality continuance of care for the resident;

The **Essential Care Visitor** must not visit and inform the provider if they develop a fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of a visit to the resident;

For additional guidance, see Contingency Standards of Care for COVID-19;

The **Essential Care Visitor** must not be allowed to visit a resident during a resident's 14-day quarantine, and must not visit when a resident is positive for COVID-19 or symptomatic, unless the visit is for compassionate care;

- If appropriate, areas where visitors and residents sit must be wiped down between visitations using an approved antiviral disinfectant -

### **One Essential Care Visitor Per Resident**

The resident must be consulted about their wishes to determine whom to designate as the **Essential Care Visitor**;

Residents may express a desire to designate more than one based on their past involvement and needs (e.g., more than one family member previously split time to provide care for the resident);

In these unique situations, facility staff should work cooperatively with the resident and family to work out a schedule to accommodate the **Essential Care Visitors**, as well as scheduling that facilitates the self determination to maintain highest level of functioning;

Work with the resident and **Essential Care Visitor** to identify a weekly schedule;

Ensure scheduling of **Essential Care Visitor** visits that considers numbers of Essential Care Visitors in the building at the same time, insuring as a priority the resident's quality care needs;

Utilize the **Essential Care Visitor** to provide care and emotional support in the same manner as prior to the pandemic, or in whatever manner necessary, as resident health care or psychological conditions may have changed;

The Facility must establish an **Essential Care Visitor** liaison with family members to serve as the communicator to the Floor (staff) of weekly visiting hours for the Essential Care Visitor and to triage any concerns that might come up during the care visit and beyond;

The facility must allow evening and weekend visits that accommodate the **Essential Care Visitor** who may be limited by work or child care barriers.

Direct the **Essential Care Visitor** to provide care in the resident's room as appropriate for privacy, or in facility-designated areas within the building. The Essential Care Visitor must limit movement in the facility.

### **Outside Visits for Essential Care Visitors and their loved one**

The **Essential Care Visitor** may take the resident outside for a walk in a designated area on the facility property (if appropriate) during their time with the resident; pushing a wheelchair while the Essential Care Visitor is wearing appropriate PPE, and the resident is wearing a face covering, as tolerated, as an acceptable activity;

The Facility must establish a direct route to the outside visiting area for the resident and their **Essential Care Visitor**;

The **Essential Care Visitor** must plan this out-door activity in advance with appropriate Facility Staff;

The resident must not be COVID-19 positive, and must not be on an isolated floor or in quarantine for exposure to COVID-19;

The **Essential Care Visitor** must maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet with staff and other residents while in the building and outside;

The **Essential Care Visitor** should not take the resident out into the community except for essential medical appointments.

The **Essential Care Visitor** must not be allowed to visit a resident during a resident's 14-day quarantine, and must not visit when a resident is positive for COVID-19 or symptomatic, unless the visit is for compassionate care;

New COVID admissions to a facility would not constitute a facility-onset COVID case.

- Adequate staff must be present to allow for personnel to help with the outdoor transition of residents, monitoring of visitation, and wiping down visitation areas after each family, partner or friendship visit.
- Resident visitors must be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID.

- Facilities must provide alcohol-based hand rub to families visiting residents and demonstrate how to use it appropriately if necessary.
- Facilities may establish additional guidelines as needed to ensure the safety of visitations and their facility's operations

## **Resource Page for Essential Care Visitors**

### **Connecticut**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/20200609-DPH-Order-regarding-patients-with-disabilities-in-health-care-facilities.pdf>

### **Massachusetts**

### **Indiana**

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/longtermcare/index.htm>

### **Minnesota**

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ltccaregiver.pdf>

### **California**

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-22.aspx>

### **1987 Nursing Home Reform Law / Bill of Rights and Rationale**

[https://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-2001/the\\_1987\\_nursing\\_home\\_reform\\_act.html#:~:text=The%20Residents'%20Bill%20of%20Rights&text=The%20right%20to%20freedom%20from%20physical%20restraints%3B&text=The%20right%20to%20participate%20in%20the%20review%20of%20one's%20care.grievances%20without%20discrimination%20or%20reappraisal.](https://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-2001/the_1987_nursing_home_reform_act.html#:~:text=The%20Residents'%20Bill%20of%20Rights&text=The%20right%20to%20freedom%20from%20physical%20restraints%3B&text=The%20right%20to%20participate%20in%20the%20review%20of%20one's%20care.grievances%20without%20discrimination%20or%20reappraisal.)

*Document created by [www.Essential Care Visitors.com](http://www.Essential Care Visitors.com)  
Document ECV2020*