

October 28, 2020

## COVID -19: Interim Visitation Guidance for Certified “Supportive” Residential Facilities

### Background:

On June 18, 2020 OPWDD issued *COVID -19: Interim Visitation Guidance for Certified Residential Facilities*. In recognition of the distinct differences in staffing and operation of residences not providing 24-hour support (aka “supportive” residences), the following guidance is provided to ensure individuals living in these homes can enjoy visitation safely and with consideration of possible risks and needed precautions.

The guidance applies to residences certified as a Supportive Community Residence, and any Small or Large Individualized Residential Alternative that provides less than 24-hour staff support.

### Visitation For Individuals Living in a Supportive Residential Facility:

Like all residential facilities, visitation with family and friends of those served within supportive environments must be scheduled ahead of time so that all appropriate precautions can be implemented, including the following:

#### Prior to the Visit

- The agency must instruct individuals living in supportive residences to notify residence management of any visit planning discussed with family/friends. Individuals should also notify management when they are interested in arranging a visit. Individuals must be instructed who in residence management to contact and how (email, phone, other);
- The agency should work with individuals to create a list of the people most important to them that they would like to have visit at their home. Individuals should be advised regarding the maximum number of people who can visit their home at one time (e.g. no more than 2 visitors at a time, depending on the size of the home and ability to maintain social distancing) in order to comply with COVID-19 precautions;
- The individual, with support of the agency, and/or a staff member must inform the potential visitors that visits are required to be scheduled in advance, how to arrange the visits, and

COVID-19 precautions to be implemented during the visit (for more information, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/hcf-visitors.html>).

- Individuals must be educated regarding COVID-19 precautions and why advance notification and planning is necessary. Individuals should also be informed that they are not required to allow visitors if they do not want;
- Staff must review with the individual the COVID-19 precautions to be followed during the visit with the individual. The review includes the expectations that the individual and their visitor wear masks, maintaining a distance of at least six (6) feet from each other, and implement frequent handwashing and hand sanitizer use. This can be during a routinely scheduled staff visit;
- If the individual to be visited has any roommates/housemates, those roommates must be notified ahead of time, by either the individual or the agency staff, that a visitor(s) will be present and advised how to remain socially distant from them or assisted to make plans to be elsewhere;
- Staff must verify that there is an adequate supply of masks, hand sanitizer, hand soap and paper towels at the individual's residence. This can be during a routinely scheduled staff visit;
- Staff must verify that there is a log where the visitor's name and contact information, as well as the date and start and end time of the visit should be documented. If neither the visitor or the resident is capable of documenting on the log, an assigned staff member will maintain a log remotely based on notification of arrival and departure of the visitor(s).

#### On the Day of the Visit

- On the day of a scheduled visit, a staff member must contact the individual to be visited (and roommate, if any) to verbally discuss their health status and instruct them to take their temperature, evaluate for any symptoms and report their results to residence management. If this passes the mandatory health screening protocols, the visit can occur as planned;
- If an individual does not pass screening, agency procedures must be followed regarding notifications and health precautions;

- If the visit can proceed based on the individual passing the health screening, then either the individual to be visited or an assigned staff member will contact the visitor to complete a screening with them prior to the visit, discussing required symptom check, exposure and travel questions and requiring the person to take and report their temperature. Visitors shall be denied access if they report any of the following: COVID-19 exposure or COVID-related symptoms during the prior 14 days; travel to a state or country on NYS's Travel Advisory list within the previous 14 days; or having a temperature over 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- All visitors will be asked to perform meticulous hand hygiene and wear a mask or face-covering throughout the visit.
- The agency is responsible to ensure that a daily log of all visitors is maintained, which shall include names and contact information for each visitor.

Please note that any visitation restrictions placed on certified residential facilities in designated cluster zones will also apply to supportive residential facilities and will supersede this guidance.