

## Visitation Policy for Residential Programs

Date: 3/15/2021

The purpose of this policy is to provide further clarification around visitation protocols within the residential community. As the COVID-19 cases continue to drop in the state of Massachusetts, Fidelity House CRC felt it was necessary to update its Visitation Policy, to include indoor on-site visits. We continue to work closely with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) with regards to visitation and safety precautions. Most importantly, we continue to follow the CDC guidelines as they continue to change frequently. Such guidance in addition to the DDS recommendations are all collaboratively the reasons for how we determine what FHCRC's plan will be. There have been recent changes announced by the state, specifically from CDC and DDS towards lifting some of their previously known restrictions, post vaccination. With that said, FHCRC has decided to remain cautious about lifting any restrictions throughout the organization, without a thoughtful and gradual transition plan in place.

We acknowledge just how important it is to keep everyone as connected as possible during this time, so we are taking the extra precautions around visitations for the overall safety of the people we support and our staff. It is important to us that we help connect families to their loved ones as often as possible in hopes of fully regaining some form of normalcy in the lives of all who have been impacted by COVID-19. We have been able to successfully provide vaccines for staff and people we support throughout the organization, and I am happy to announce that 40% of our staff and 99% of the individuals supported have been successfully vaccinated. Thank you to our wonderful Nursing department!

We encourage family visits as much as possible, and although we will not be allowing the extent of what the DDS guidelines recommend at this time, we will be keeping you updated regularly on all changes to our policy. Both FHCRC and DDS recognize how difficult the last year has been for some, if not most. Our number one priority is keeping the individuals and employees as safe as possible, so we hope to continue to see more opportunities to reevaluate our policies and procedures in the very near future. In the meantime, please review the FHCRC Visitation Policy that is noted below, effective 3-15-2021.

We also continue to require that when family members visit any of the residential homes that they adhere to the following:

### VISITATION POLICY

#### Indoor/Outdoor On-Site Visitation:

- Visits must be scheduled with the Program Director in advance to allow coordination with others that may also want to visit and to ensure appropriate staffing levels.
- Visits will be allowed for **up** to two hours, unless there is a special request
- The visit will take place in a dedicated area within the home
- All visitors over the age of 2 years old are required to wear a face mask while visiting
- All visitors must be screened prior to the visit
- Visits that are held outdoors (*in the Patio, deck, driveway, yard or porch of any kind*) are allowed, while wearing face masks and practicing social distancing.
- Social distancing must be maintained throughout the entire visit

- Outside furniture and surfaces are cleaned before and after each use, using an EPA-approved disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV-2
- Residential homes will be limited to accommodating one visit per individual each day
- FHCRC has discretion to cancel a prescheduled family visit if there is a reason for cancelling that is related to a potential exposure. Visits are not permitted in homes that are under quarantine status at any point in time.
- Residential programs are encouraged to allow visiting hours throughout the day and should stagger visits as necessary in order to accommodate social distancing.
- Visitors should call ahead to ensure that the home is not under quarantine on that very day.
- Residents will also be encouraged to wear face coverings if they can tolerate it and do so safely.

**Off-site visitation: TBD**

- All off-site visits are on hold until further notice
- Any significant and or special circumstances can be discussed with the Program Director and their Supervisor for further guidance and consideration

**Eating Together During a Visit:**

- Visitors may want to bring a favorite food or a meal to share with their loved ones, eating together during the visit should be monitored with risk reduction in mind.
- No food should be shared off of the same plate or drinking by mouth from the same container.
- Each person should use their own eating utensils and should not be sharing plates, cups, or utensils.
- Any communal food brought that is left over after a visit should be disposed of or should be taken by the visitor.
- Visitors will only be allowed to bring in food that is already packaged and prepared by a restaurant. Take out is acceptable. The reasoning behind this is that the containers in which the food comes in are all disposable. We are not allowing for personal food containers and or utensils to be brought into the residential homes at this time.

**Screening Process:**

- All visitors must continue to be screened prior to visiting with a person living in a group residence.
- Any visitor with symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter the program. The symptoms include fever, cough, muscle pain, sore throat, shortness of breath, chills and any loss of taste or smell sensation.
- Anyone with a fever of (100.0 or higher) will not be allowed to visit the home.
- Thermometers must be disinfected after each use
- Visitors are not permitted to visit if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days or if they have been ordered by a medical professional to quarantine due to exposure.
- Any individual who participates in a visit and develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, or new onset loss of smell or



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taste within 2 days after the visit must immediately notify the program of the date they were on site, the individuals they were in contact with, and the location where the visit occurred.

- Programs should immediately screen the individuals who had contact with the visitor for the level of exposure and follow up with the program's medical director or the patient/resident's care provider.

Visitation Policies are subject to change at any given time if a resident, staff, or visitor test positive for COVID or if they show any symptoms of illness. Such measures are designed to limit the spread of COVID-19 and keep everyone safe. We continue to encourage the practice of good hand hygiene and social distancing. In the coming weeks we will provide additional information to any changes in our policies.

Thank you for your understanding and collaboration in the past year, it truly takes a community of great people to champion the efforts of keeping the individuals we support in good overall health and spirits.

Sincerely,

Wanda C. Gomez  
VP of Community Living