

Shrewsbury



Nursing and
Rehabilitation Center

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November 20, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Representatives,

As the holidays approach with Thanksgiving around the corner, and Hanukah, Christmas and New Year not far behind, we find ourselves still living in this COVID-19 world in which we are all wearing masks, socially distancing, not travelling, and still not able to visit loved ones in nursing homes when you want. This has been a huge sacrifice for all families. We have done our best to accommodate the visitation guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), providing you designated times and space to see your loved one here at Shrewsbury Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (SNRC). I'm sure at times it feels like it's not enough, but please believe me - your loved one is enjoying each visit they have with you.

I wish times were different and hope the vaccine comes sooner rather than later to aid in this virus going away. Until then, SNRC continues to be vigilant in our infection control practices, hand washing, social distancing, and utilizing personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with the Center for Disease Control. Our residents have remained COVID free since the end of April. We have had individual cases in which two staff have tested positive here on October 18th and October 20th. Both were asymptomatic. We completed contact tracing in each case, and the staff were removed from the schedule and quarantined per the guidelines of DPH/CMS.

In the event any resident or staff tests positive, I will notify you within 24 hours of the positive result by email, voice friend, and regular mail. Half of our staff is currently tested bi-weekly such that 100% of the entire staff is tested monthly. If any staff is found to be COVID-19 positive, residents that are negative for COVID-19 (who have never tested positive) will get tested. This then will change staff testing to 100% weekly, and we will test 100% of the staff weekly until 100% of the staff is found to be COVID-19-free for two consecutive weeks. After that, we would go back to bi-weekly testing for the staff.

I've also attached a letter sent by the Massachusetts Secretary for Health and Human Services, Mary Lou Sudders, on behalf of the DPH to review guidelines of holiday leaves and celebrating holidays with your loved ones at your home. These are guidelines to consider if you are planning to take your loved one home for the holidays. Please contact SNRC to discuss plans of individual cases of upcoming visits and how the residents will need to return and quarantine. As the cases rise in Massachusetts, please bear in mind all factors when considering taking your loved one home. Please feel free to call me with any questions. In the meantime, stay safe and Happy Thanksgiving. Again, thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Sue Gauthier, LNHA - Administrator
Tel.: (508) 841-4755 e-Mail: sgauthier@snrc.net

A Caring and Compassionate Nursing & Rehabilitation Center Since 1969

Holiday letter to LTC/CC families

As we begin the holiday season, the Commonwealth is offering some considerations and recommendations on how to celebrate the holidays with your loved ones who reside in a congregate care setting ranging from a nursing home to a group home. We know that the holidays are important for loved ones as a time to come together and be together. As you make plans to visit and celebrate with your loved one, we encourage you to assess the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.

Staying Safe this Holiday Season

The Department of Public Health (DPH) released [guidance](#) earlier this month that all Massachusetts residents should follow, offering considerations for how to keep friends, families and our communities safe during the holiday season. While any gathering poses some risk, you can reduce the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19 by wearing a mask, keeping the guest list small and limited to one household, and keeping visits short when social distancing cannot be maintained.

There are important considerations when planning celebrations with a loved one who lives in a congregate setting. Many people living in congregate settings are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19 and may have health conditions putting them at a higher risk of becoming sick, or even severely ill, with COVID-19. When determining whether to include your loved one in a holiday gathering, it is important to take into account both the health and safety of your loved one, as well as the health and safety of your loved one's roommates, other people living on their floor or in their home, and the staff that care for them.

There are a number of ways you can celebrate the holidays with your loved one. Due to the rise in cases across the state and country, we recommend participating in a lower-risk visit with your loved one.

Examples of Ways to Celebrate:

- **Low risk:** Celebrate virtually with your loved one using methods such as Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, or Google Duo.
- **Low-medium risk:** Visit your loved one at their residence. Bring their favorite Thanksgiving food or a holiday treat, following safety guidelines including mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing. The risk level of a visit to the facility or residence depends on the number of visitors and the potential exposure to COVID-19 that any of the visitors may have had.
- **Medium-high risk:** Bring your loved one home to celebrate with just your household, following safety guidelines including mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing, and frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces. For two weeks prior to your holiday gatherings, limit exposure to COVID-19 by avoiding indoor settings with people you don't live with where you cannot socially distance or wear a mask (e.g., indoor social events, restaurants, carpooling). Your loved one may need to quarantine for 14 days upon return to their congregate care setting.
- **Very high risk:** Bring your loved one home to celebrate with multiple households, not following social distancing, handwashing, cleaning, or mask guidance.

Policy in Development

Guidelines on Visits and Travel

All in-person visits and off-sites are subject to relevant guidance and protocols. Please be sure to consult the latest visitation guidance for [long-term care facilities](#), [ALRs](#), and [congregate care settings](#) and talk to your loved one's residence about setting up an in-person visit or making off-site arrangements.

Prior to any in-person visit, all participants should [screen](#) themselves for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and are encouraged to get a COVID-19 test. Please check mass.gov/covid-19-testing for locations. Out-of-state family members visiting for the holidays must comply with all travel requirements outlined in the Massachusetts [COVID-19 travel order](#). You are exempt from these requirements if your travel is limited to a brief trip to visit a person in a long-term care or congregate care setting, for example driving from Rhode Island to Massachusetts to visit a parent in a nursing home for one hour, and then immediately returning home.

For the safety of your loved one and the community, we encourage you to communicate with the facility or residence before making plans to bring your loved one home to understand their policies and ensure your celebration is as safe as possible. Facilities and residences may require your loved one to quarantine for 14 days when they return to the facility or residence if you bring them home for a celebration, out of concern for the safety of your loved one and others. If your loved one must quarantine, they may be asked to quarantine in a temporary room.

Additional Resources

In addition to discussing with your loved one's facility or residence, there are resources available to discuss how to safely celebrate with your loved one. Families of loved ones in long-term care settings, including ALRs, can contact the **Nursing Home Family Resource at 617-660-5399**. Families of loved ones in other congregate settings should reach out to their loved one's case manager, social worker, or service coordinator for additional support.

We hope that you and your loved ones have a safe and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Marylou Sudders

Department of Public

Secretary Health and Human Services