



Health and Human Services Department
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January 5, 2022

Dear Families and Friends of Residents in Congregate Care, Senior and Skilled Nursing Facilities:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Evanston Health and Human Services Department (EHHS) has been working closely with congregate care facilities. This current surge has brought new challenges, and facilities and residents are struggling as the number of COVID-19 cases climb and continue to stay elevated for long periods of time. **We are asking for your help protecting your loved ones and the staff who serve them.**

Our Department has received reports from facilities describing situations whereby visitors and/or family members are visiting residents and: a) not disclosing they are symptomatic on screening forms, b) not reporting their active COVID-19 infection at the time of their visit, and c) not complying with masking and social distancing while in the facility. Subsequent contact tracing has revealed that some residents have contracted COVID-19 from these visitors.

EHHS is strongly encouraging all visitors to help keep their loved ones safe. Please only visit if all of the following criteria are met:

- You are fully vaccinated at the time of the visit,
- You test negative for COVID-19 infection within the 24 hours before visitation,
- You have not had a known exposure to COVID-19 in the past 10 days, and
- You are completely asymptomatic, and *you have not had even one of the following symptoms* in the 24 hours before the visit:
 - fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches/body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nasal congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

The entire community shares the responsibility and accountability to protect the health and well-being of our most vulnerable residents by using vaccination, testing and symptom screening as tools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in facilities. Please help us keep your loved ones safe by following the guidelines above. If you cannot, please delay your visit until you can.

It is also required by state law that you wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth for the entirety of your indoor visit at the facility. If you cannot comply with this requirement, please do not visit your loved one until further notice. You can be asked to leave for not complying with this law.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Ike C. Ogbo, BS, MPH
Director
Evanston Department of Health and Human Services