



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Aging & Long-Term Services
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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24 Counties Eligible for Expanded Nursing Home Visitation Options

Eligible long-term care facilities can provide open-window and chatterbox visits

SANTA FE – In August 2020, state Officials, under the leadership of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, announced new guidelines for long-term care facilities to expand COVID-safe visitation options for residents and their loved ones. Today, the state announced facilities in 24 counties are eligible, based on the COVID-positivity rates in their region. Expanded visitation options include masked open-window visits and masked “chatterbox” visits for residents and their loved ones to ensure the safety of residents and facility staff workers.

Today, October 5th, long-term care facilities that are not experiencing a new positive COVID-19 case or outbreak and that are located within the following 24 counties (which each have a COVID-positivity rate below 5 percent), will be able to provide additional visitation options for their residents and their loved ones:

Bernalillo	Los Alamos	Sandoval
Catron	McKinley	Santa Fe
Cibola	Mora	Sierra
Colfax	Otero	Taos
De Baca	Quay	Torrance
Grant	Rio Arriba	Valencia
Guadalupe	San Juan	Harding
Hidalgo	San Miguel	Union

The new guidelines will allow once-monthly, by-appointment, open-window visits or visits using a plexiglass barrier between a single family member and a COVID-negative resident. During the visit, all participants will need to wear masks (unless the resident has a medical condition that prohibits them from wearing a mask, in which case they will need to be 12 feet away). Staff at the facilities will need to be present if the resident is unable to maintain a safe social distance. Facilities will also be able to create outdoor visitation stations.

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Eligibility criteria for the counties as well as the guidelines will be posted at cv.nmhealth.org at the end of every month.

Communities across the nation have started building plexiglass cubicles, chatterboxes and other non-traditional structures that allow face-to-face visits while keeping both family members and residents safe from the potential transmission of COVID-19. Each facility will need to oversee the creation of the cubicles, scheduling the visits and implementing the new in-person visits.

Long-term care facilities have been instructed by the Department of Health to ensure these spaces are thoroughly cleaned before and after use.

For the safety of residents and visitors, visitation will be discontinued if there is a new positive or an outbreak within a facility. These new visitation options can resume once the facility has gone two weeks without a new positive and if the county meets eligibility criteria. Visitation guidelines could change based on the positivity rate of the county.

All testing, infection control, the management of COVID-positive cases, and PPE measures remain the same.

Closed-window, virtual and telephonic visitation may continue and is encouraged. Compassionate care visits for residents at end-of-life and those with declining health is also still permitted. All screening measures must be maintained, and the state's operative emergency public health order remains in effect in all settings. No staff member or visitor who is sick or feeling unwell should be allowed in the facility or participate in visitations.

For more information regarding the new visitation options visit cv.nmhealth.org or contact the New Mexico Department of Health's Division of Health Improvement at 505-476-9074.

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