



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**Aging & Long-Term Services**  
**Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, Cabinet Secretary  
Sam Ojinaga, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Nursing Home Visitation Guidelines Updated**

*State plans for expanding COVID-safe visitation options at long-term care facilities*

**SANTA FE** -- Under the leadership of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department is working with the New Mexico Department of Health and the Medical Advisory Team to create gradual re-opening plans for long-term care facilities.

The Statewide long-term care visitation guidelines follow public health data in facilitating additional safe visitation options to residents and their loved ones in these high-risk settings.

Starting Monday, August 10, 2020, long-term care facilities, not experiencing a new positive or outbreak, located within the 21 counties with a COVID-positivity rate below 5%, will be able to provide additional visitation options for their residents and their loved ones. Eligibility criteria for the Counties as well as the guidelines will be posted at [cv.nmhealth.org](http://cv.nmhealth.org) on Monday. During this initial phase, at the end of every month, based on positivity rate, the next month's visitation-eligible Counties will be posted.

The new guidelines will allow once a month, 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 12ft 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.

Communities across the nation have started building plexiglass cubicles, "chatter boxes", 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.

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“Long-term care residents and their families have suffered over these long months of the pandemic,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “I know this difficulty first-hand, having been unable to spend time with my mother. But lives hang in the balance, and we must continue to protect everyone from the spread of COVID-19, including and especially the most vulnerable. The state’s plans for allowing additional safe visits are built around public health data and safe practices that we know work in slowing and stopping the spread. I am hopeful this will bring some small measure of relief to residents and families across the state and that we remain as vigilant as ever in fighting this virus every single day.”

ALTSD Cabinet Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez also encouraged family members to take note of their loved one’s environment. “If you’re visiting your family member through an open window, notice the smell of the room, observe your loved one’s physical wellbeing and their hygiene, and if you notice anything amiss please contact our State Ombudsman at 1-866-451-2901,” said Secretary Hotrum-Lopez.

The following Counties are currently eligible to begin scheduling monthly visits starting Monday:

Bernalillo	Harding	Sandoval
Catron	Hidalgo	Santa Fe
Colfax	Los Alamos	Sierra
De Baca	Quay	Socorro
Eddy	Rio Arriba	Taos
Grant	San Juan	Torrance
Guadalupe	San Miguel	Valencia

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 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 are 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](http://cv.nmhealth.org) or contact the New Mexico Department of Health’s Division of Health Improvement at 505-476-9074.

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