

## For Immediate Release

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For more information, contact:

[Cara Sloan-Ramos](#)

785-296-0807

### **New Federal Guidelines Increase Restrictions for Visitors to Nursing Homes**

*KDADS working quickly to ensure Kansas facilities following enhanced CMS guidelines*

Governor Laura Kelly, Kansas Department for Health and Environment (KDHE) Secretary Dr. Lee Norman and Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) Secretary Laura Howard today announced enhanced measures for state nursing facilities to protect residents from the COVID-19 outbreak.

“Over the weekend the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid announced aggressive new guidelines for nursing home safety,” Governor Kelly said. “Secretary Howard and her KDADS team are moving quickly to make sure Kansas facilities are strictly adhering to the guidelines.”

“Unfortunately, we’ve already had one fatality in a Kansas nursing home,” KDHE Secretary Dr. Lee Norman said. “We need to take quick action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through our nursing facilities. Other state licensed residential facilities also are encouraged to revisit their screening, visitation and activity protocols in light of this nursing facility guidance.”

The new guidance:

- Restricts all visitors, effective immediately, with exceptions for compassionate care, such as end-of-life situations;
- Restricts all volunteers and nonessential health care personnel and other personnel (i.e. barbers);
- Cancels all group activities and communal dining; and
- Implements active screening of residents and health care personnel for fever and respiratory symptoms

In end of life cases, visitors will be equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks, and the visit will be limited to a specific room only.

“I understand the vital importance of keeping nursing home residents connected with their loved ones,” Howard said. “However, the rapid spread of COVID-19 through visitors and health care workers – as

well as nursing home residents' high risk – has made it necessary to restrict nonessential visitation in order to protect the health and safety of residents.”

KDADS, along with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is encouraging facilities to increase virtual communication between residents and families. Facilities should also keep residents' loved ones informed about their care. Nursing homes also are expected to notify potential visitors to stop visitation until further notice through signage and other outreach like email and phone calls.

Anyone visiting a nursing home should be prepared to be screened for potential disease that would include questions about travel, potential exposure and taking temperatures.

Other recommendations for nursing homes include:

- Putting hand sanitizer with 60 -95 percent alcohol in every resident room, both inside and outside;
- Sinks should be well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing;
- Tissues and facemasks should be available for people who are coughing; and
- Make necessary PPE available in areas where resident care is provided.

A full list of the guidance can be found [here](#).

For more information on COVID-19 visit: [www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus).

You also can call 1-866-534-3463 (1-866-KDHEINF).