



Ron Stursma
Vista Woods Care Center
3 Pennsylvania Place
Ottumwa, IA 52501

November 17, 2020

RE: Holiday Visitation

Dear Residents and Families,

As the holidays approach we are receiving questions about our policies relating to holiday visitation. We understand how difficult this year has been with COVID-19. Not being able to visit in person is not easy, and the upcoming holiday season doesn't make it any easier.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that can be spread by those who don't show any symptoms, and the COVID-19 positivity rate in Iowa and surrounding states is at an all-time high. Our long-term care residents are particularly at risk due to their age and pre-existing health conditions.

This letter provides important information on visitation in our facility this holiday season, as well as guidance for residents who choose to go on visits outside of the facility for the holidays.

Vista Woods Care Center is currently offering closed window visits and virtual visits via: telephone, FaceTime and Zoom.

In Wapello county, the current county positivity rate is 22.3%. This rate classifies our county in the highest level of risk under the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services classifications (CMS). Under CMS regulations communities located in counties with a high positivity rates like ours are not allowed to conduct indoor visitation, other than compassionate care visits, until our county positivity rates decline to under 10%.

Families have inquired about residents leaving the facility to attend gatherings in other locations. Residents may attend these visits; however, these types of visits are not advised. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that older individuals and those with medical conditions that put them at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should avoid-in person

gatherings with people not in their household (or in this case people who live outside of the facility where they reside). The Governor has also encouraged all Iowans to avoid high-risk events where social distancing cannot be accommodated, such as holiday celebrations. Given the high risk of our residents and the current extremely high community positivity levels, we encourage you to visit your loved one through virtual means or outdoor visits when temperatures are appropriate.

If you or your loved ones attend an offsite gathering, we urge you to follow CDC guidelines to minimize the severe risk of COVID-19 exposure to your loved one, and to minimize their likelihood of exposing others when they return to the facility. The full CDC guidance is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html> and includes tips for how to attempt to minimize COVID-19 exposure risk at holiday gatherings and what factors to consider in deciding whether to host a holiday gathering.

In the interest of the safety of all of our residents, we will be taking the following additional measures to monitor our residents who attend offsite gatherings as a precaution to help minimize the exposure risk to others upon their return:

- Residents who leave the facility for offsite visits will be required to enter quarantine upon return to the community for a period of 14 days. (Per Iowa Department of Health requirements)

We know this holiday season will be a challenging time for families and residents. We want you to know we are doing everything we can to ensure your loved one is safe, including taking appropriate infection control measures, implementing visitor safety protocols, and testing our staff twice weekly. We appreciate the incredible sacrifices families and residents have made this year to keep their loved ones safe and healthy.

We are excited to celebrate Thanksgiving here at the community and wanted to share our Thanksgiving menu. COVID-19 may have changed a lot of things this year, but we will still have yummy food and pie available for our residents to enjoy.

Our Thanksgiving menu includes:

- Choice of turkey or ham
- Homemade dressing
- Mashed potatoes with gravy
- Choice of candied sweet potatoes or green bean casserole
- Choice of pie: pumpkin, apple, chocolate or pecan

Please contact Tammy Fisher, DON or Athena Osteen, IP at Vista Woods Care Center if you have any questions or concerns about visitation or holiday plans in our community.

Respectfully,

 Ron Sturman, Adm.