



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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MDHHS Expansion of Visitation at Residential Facilities Provides Compassionate Care, Protects Vulnerable People

*Masks, other safety requirements protect health and safety
during limited visitations*

LANSING, MICH. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon has signed two epidemic orders that provide for expanded visitations at group facilities while also requiring precautions that protect public health.

The orders allow expanded visitation in long-term care facilities including nursing homes, and in facilities for youth who are in child caring institutions or juvenile justice facilities.

Visitors to these types of facilities have been temporarily restricted to slow the spread of COVID-19. The new orders provide exceptions to those restrictions in limited circumstances as long as the facilities meet specific safety requirements -- such as requiring mask during visits.

"It's been very difficult for residents of these facilities to be unable to see their loved ones during the pandemic," Gordon said. "We are glad Michigan can now allow visits in some circumstances, but we continue to urge caution and require safety precautions like wearing masks during visits."

The orders are effective immediately.

One order applies to residential long-term care facilities, which include nursing homes, homes for the aged, adult foster care facilities, hospice facilities, substance abuse disorder residential facilities, independent living facilities and assisted living facilities. The order applies in limited circumstances and takes into account the importance of compassionate care for Michiganders who have terminal illnesses. It allows visits only with residents who are in serious or critical condition or in hospice care, or visits from family members or friends who assist residents with activities of daily living – such as eating, bathing or dressing.

The other order affects youth in congregate care facilities – known as child caring institutions – and juvenile justice facilities – also known as juvenile detention facilities. Child caring institutions are defined as facilities receiving minor children for care, maintenance and supervision, usually on a 24-hour basis, in buildings maintained by the institution for that purpose and that operate throughout the year. They can include facilities for youth who are in foster care.

The youth congregate care order allows youth residents to have off-campus visits to a parent, foster parent or prospective adoptive parent if the person or persons being visited agree in advance to abide by safety measures as recommended by the CDC to reduce exposure to COVID-19. These measures must have been in place for at least two weeks prior to the scheduled visit. Additionally, the parent, foster parent or prospective adoptive parent must not have a known exposure to COVID-19 or have symptoms, unless that person has had a negative test result since the last known exposure.

Safety requirements that facilities must follow to allow visitors can be found in the epidemic orders [for residential long-term care facilities](#) and for [congregate care facilities](#). The requirements in each order are different based on the needs of each population and safety concerns. For example, in long-term care facilities visitors must schedule an appointment.

Both orders require visitors to be assessed for COVID-19 symptoms, to wear mask or face coverings and to maintain social distancing, among other precautions. MDHHS is encouraging outdoor visitation when possible.

Information around the COVID-19 outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

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