



March 1, 2021

Commissioner Jan Malcolm
Minnesota Department of Health
Commissioner's Office
P.O. BOX 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Via electronic delivery

Dear Commissioner Malcolm

We are writing to ask you and your colleagues at the Department of Health to update the state's guidance on long-term care visitation. In October, the Department of Health updated this guidance to align with federal guidance; since then, facilities have had to allow visitors, but residents were unable to travel outside of their facility.

Things have changed dramatically since October, in large part thanks to the state's vaccination efforts. It is time for you and the Department of Health to update this guidance to allow those residents who have been vaccinated to leave facilities and see loved ones more freely.

Many of my constituents have contacted me, frustrated at their continued inability to take their loved ones to church, out for a meal, home for an afternoon, or just out for a drive to see the outside world. They have been vaccinated and are no longer at risk of contracting COVID-19 or spreading it to others. It makes no sense that these residents should continue being locked up inside long-term care facilities.

Our request is simple. Once seniors have been vaccinated and waited 10 days for the vaccine to take hold, they should be allowed to make their own decisions about leaving their facility if medically able. I understand the state cannot modify the federal regulations which govern skilled nursing facilities; however, for the variety of settings we can regulate, we should act as soon as possible. Our elderly citizens have been locked away for almost a year with significant consequences for their emotional and mental health. Please let them return to some semblance of normalcy after one of the most difficult years in their lives.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Handwritten signature of Kristin Robbins in black ink.

Representative Kristin Robbins
House District 34A

Handwritten signature of Karin Housley in black ink.

Senator Karin Housley
Senate District 39