



GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Memo 20-45

To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Infection Preventionist and QA Committee

From: Mary Gracey-White RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance &
Arlette Drigpaul MSN, RN, Infection Preventionist/Education Coordinator

Date: November 19, 2020

Re: HOLIDAY ALERT

This past year has been stressful and isolating for many people, including our nursing home residents. The Holidays, particularly Thanksgiving, is right around the corner – a time usually for families and friends to gather and reconnect. Unfortunately, because the COVID-19 pandemic is worsening, it is **strongly** advised for people to limit gatherings to those within your household and to avoid large gatherings to assist in mitigating the spread of the COVID virus. Please plan with your facility Team ways to promote joyful holiday celebrations for residents creatively using decorations, special meal planning, music etc., whether in small groups or throughout facility. Visiting guidelines remain unchanged. For facilities that are not open to visitors, set up additional remote visiting, calls, letters, and cards for residents.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in its November 17, 2020 memo, has issued some guidance for Nursing Homes for the Thanksgiving holiday. CMS and the NYSDOH **strongly advise against residents leaving facilities** during the holidays.

For Residents/Families that do not follow the recommendation to avoid gatherings facilities should take the following actions when residents return to the nursing home:

- Placing residents on Transmission Based Precautions for 14 days.
- A nursing home may also opt to test residents without signs or symptoms if they leave the nursing home frequently or for a prolonged length of time, such as over 24 hours
- Screen the resident upon return for possible exposure to COVID-19 while outside of the nursing home, or if the resident has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 upon return.
- Screen and increase monitoring for signs and symptoms including VS and pulse oximetry.

Nursing home staff are also encouraged to follow the guidance below regarding gathering with families and friends outside of work to protect the vulnerable residents they care for.

- Limit close contact and keep gatherings as small as possible.
- Wear facemasks or cloth face covering at all times.
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Keep safe around food and drinks.
- Perform hand hygiene often.
- Avoid large gatherings and crowded areas.
- Ask anyone who has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, to not attend the gathering.
- If possible, conduct gatherings outdoors.
- Verbally greet others instead of shaking hands or giving hugs.