



## COVID-19 Update

Date: October 15, 2020

From: Scot Spates

CEO St. John's Lutheran Community

Dear St. John's Residents, Tenants, and Families,

This week, the state and federal government issued major changes to visitor guidelines for nursing home and assisted living facilities. Visitor guidelines have changed frequently over the past eight months, and this has been challenging and frustrating for residents, tenants, families and our staff. The intent of the guidelines has always been to protect the residents and tenants from the COVID-19 virus. However, over time, there has been an acknowledgement that people need to connect with their families and friends. Many people that reside in a nursing home or assisted living setting have experienced extreme loneliness, depression, anxiety, and physical health problems due to the isolation that they are experiencing during this pandemic. The new visitor guidelines allow for more opportunities for residents and tenants to connect with their families and friends.

Effective Saturday, October 17, Essential Caregiver visits will resume and will no longer be suspended if a resident, tenant, or staff tests positive for the COVID-19 virus.

Another major change to the visitor guidelines is that other family members and friends of the residents or tenants are also allowed to visit, even though they are not the designated Essential Caregiver. These visits are allowed provided that the facility has no positive cases of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, and provided that the county positivity rate is less than 10 percent. The Freeborn County positivity rate has been running about 4 percent. There are a few other scenarios where we may have to suspend family and friend visits, but they are pretty rare.

So, this is where we are at as of today. If you are a designated Essential Caregiver for someone living at the Highway 13 Nursing Home, the Woodlands Nursing Home, or the Meadows Assisted Living, you are allowed to visit. Other visitors are allowed to visit tenants that reside in the Meadows. At this time, the Highway 13 Nursing Home and the Woodlands can only allow Essential Caregivers due to having a positive COVID-19 case in the last 14 days.

I don't want to make this confusing, but there are other scenarios where exceptions are made for visits. These exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis by the Administrator or the Director of Nursing. If you have a unique circumstance that may warrant an exception to the visitor guidelines, please contact the Administrator or the Director of Nursing during business hours Monday through Friday. If your situation is urgent and on the weekend, please call St. John's and a nurse or receptionist will reach out to the Administrator or Director of Nursing.

Lastly, I want to stress that the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention have not changed. Other than a few minor tweaks, these principles have remained the same since this virus started spreading throughout the United States.

- ✓ Do not visit if you are running a temperature, if you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or if you are not feeling well. One person ignoring this basic guideline could infect the entire building and everyone that lives and works in the building.
- ✓ Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands often throughout your visit.
- ✓ Wear a face mask when visiting.
- ✓ Wear protective eyewear during the visit
- ✓ Physically distance yourself at least 6 feet when visiting.

Visitors are required to follow the above guidelines per state and federal regulations.

### **Parameters for Essential Caregiver Visits and**

#### **Other Family and Friend Visits**

To schedule a visit, please call at least 24 hours in advance of your visit. Two telephone lines have been dedicated to scheduling visits. The telephone numbers are highlighted below.

The number of visitors in the building at one time is limited to 50% of the census.

- The Highway 13 Nursing Home can only have 15 visitors in the building at one time.
- The Woodlands can have 30 visitors at one time.
- The Meadows can only have 15 visitors at a time.

A resident or tenant may have two visitors at a time.

Essential Caregiver visits are limited to three hours.

Other family and friend visits are limited to one hour.

Visiting hours are from 9am to 7pm.

Prior to being screened by the receptionist, please use hand sanitizer located by the front entry.

Visitors must be screened by the receptionist before entering further into the building. In the event that a visitor is running a temperature of 100 degrees or more, the visit must be postponed.

- In this scenario, the visitor is encouraged to contact the Mayo COVID-19 Nurse Line at 507-293-9525 to determine if you need to be tested for the COVID-19 virus.

Visitors must go directly to the resident's room or tenant's apartment and remain there for the visit.

When you enter the resident's room and when you leave the resident's room, please use hand sanitizer.

Visits cannot take place in public areas such as sun rooms, dining rooms, lounges, etc.

### **To Schedule a Visit**

#### **Please Call 24 Hours in Advance of Visit**

St. John's has dedicated two telephone lines to schedule a visit. Simply call the respective number below and leave a message.

**If your family member resides at Fountain Lake please call 507-473-2446.**

**If you family member resides at the Highway 13 site please call: 507-473-1016.**

Please include:

1. Your name(S) (Visits are limited to two people at a time.)
2. Your visitor status. Are you a designated Essential Caregiver?
3. Your telephone number
4. Name of person that you are visiting
5. Date of visit
6. Time of visit

Your visit is now scheduled.

In the event that the visit is not allowed due to government guidelines, or a scheduling conflict, someone from St. John's will contact you.

At this time, family and friend visits are not allowed at the Woodlands and the Highway 13 Nursing Home due to positive COVID-19 test results in the last 14 days. Essential Caregivers visits are allowed.

At this time, Essential Caregiver visits and family and friend visits are allowed at the Meadows.

We are running into some technical difficulties with these phones. We should have it up and running early next week. If you are making a visit this weekend, please call the receptionist in advance of your visit.

Highway 13 Receptionist: 507-373-8226

Fountain Lake Receptionist: 507-373-2040

### **COVID Updates**

COVID Updates are posted weekly on the St. John's website at: [www.stjohnsofalbertlea.org](http://www.stjohnsofalbertlea.org).

