

State seeks feedback on draft indoor visitation guidance for residential care facilities

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) today released draft guidance for indoor visitation in residential care facilities.

Stakeholders and other interested parties can submit feedback on the draft guidance through 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 28, [using this form](#).

When the final guidance goes into effect, residential care facilities (skilled nursing facilities, assisted living residences, group homes, and intermediate care facilities) that meet the criteria will be able to implement indoor visitation.

“We know the pandemic has been trying for all of us. It’s heartbreaking to think of the missed connections and loneliness that people in long-term care facilities may be feeling,” said Dr. Eric France, Chief Medical Officer, CDPHE. “We have all sacrificed, especially the highest-risk communities, to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep people alive and well. This new guidance represents a careful path forward for allowing residents and loved ones to have face-to-face visits indoors when it is safer to do so.”

The guidance also allows for visits from service providers such as beauticians, barbers, podiatrists, dentists, and therapists. Currently, residential care facilities may offer visitation under compassionate circumstances, such as end-of-life situations, and in [outdoor environments](#). There are other circumstances under which indoor visitation must be accommodated, such as to provide support for residents with disabilities and/or for religious exercise, and for long-term care ombudsman and adult protective services.

The draft guidance states facilities must meet the following criteria to implement indoor visitation:

- Be located in counties that have less than or equal to an average of 25 new, active cases per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days or be in a county that is in the [Protect Our Neighbors Phase](#).
- If in counties with 25 to 175 new, active cases per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days, visitors must provide documentation that they have had a negative COVID-19 test in the 24 hours preceding the visit.
- Visitation is not allowed in residential care facilities in counties with more than 175 new, active cases per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days.
- Other criteria include two rounds of baseline testing for residents and staff, the ability to conduct weekly testing, no new cases in the past 28 days, maintain 14 days of personal protective equipment (PPE), and have adequate staff for visitation and resident needs.

When indoor visitation is implemented, visitors must:

- Have taken a COVID-19 test and received a negative result within 24 hours of conducting the visit, if applicable, based on the degree of community spread.
- Be fever-free, symptom free, and have no known exposure to COVID-19.
- Be age 18 and older.
- Schedule appointments in advance.
- Wear masks and adhere to all facility visitation rules.

The full guidance, drafted by the Residential Care Strike Team, is available [here](#). The Residential Care Strike Team is composed of representatives of the Governor's Office and state agencies that play a role in regulating and supporting residential care facilities. Visit [the Residential Care Strike Team web page](#) for more information.