

Covid-19 Facebook Update #54

May 21, 2021

Staff and residents at Ballou, who are not fully vaccinated were swabbed this week. All of our residents and staff continue to remain Covid-free. They are scheduled for their second dose of Moderna, Monday May 24th, and on June 7th, they will be fully vaccinated.

Visitation is now offered seven days per week, by appointment. All residents may leave the facility and return without the need for quarantine provided there is no close contact. All visitors, vendors and staff must wear a surgical mask at all times, and may choose not to wear a mask outside only if all are fully vaccinated.

We will be actively engaged in implementing a plan that incorporates the following guidelines and allows virtual and in-person visitation in a way that resident health and safety is protected to the greatest extent possible.

- **Facilities that have not had any positive COVID-19 cases may not restrict visitation “without a reasonable clinical or safety cause” consistent with CMS regulations.**
- **Compassionate care visits will always be permitted.**
- **Indoor in-person visitation will continue for non-infected, asymptomatic residents who are not required to quarantine, whether or not they are vaccinated**
- **Indoor in-person visits are restricted to specifically designated areas for visits.**
- **Outdoor in-person visits are preferred, even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, weather and logistics permitting.**
- **COVID-19 screening, testing for unvaccinated residents, testing for vaccinated and unvaccinated staff, hand hygiene, face mask wearing, physical distancing, quarantine restrictions, and environmental cleaning will remain in effect. RIDOH encourages COVID-19 testing of people visiting long-term care residents, but facilities should not require visitors to be tested or vaccinated as a condition of visitation.**

Virtual Visitation • While in-person visits are allowed by appointment, Ballou has a process to allow for remote communications between a resident and a virtual visitor, such as by video call applications on cell phones or tablets.

In-Person Visitation • All of the following are required for indoor and outdoor in-person visitation:

- **Screening of all who enter the facility and/or premises for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions and/or observations about signs and symptoms).**
- **Denial of entry for those who: Have signs or symptoms of COVID-19, even if they’re vaccinated. Have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days, unless they’ve been vaccinated or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days and completed their isolation period. Close contact means you’ve been within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period. Are currently in quarantine based on Rhode Island quarantine requirements.**
- **Residents meet all Rhode Island quarantine requirements.**
- **Face covering or mask that fits snugly but comfortably**

over your nose, mouth, and chin without any gaps. Great protection: N-95, KN-95, or KF-94 mask
Good protection: Surgical (medical) masks that fit properly • Physical distancing between people in accordance with the most current state and federal requirements. • Residents and visitors should not travel through designated COVID-19 care spaces. • High-touch surfaces in visitation areas, such as tables, are cleaned after each visit. • Frequent hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred). • Staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as indicated.

All of the following are recommended for in-person visitation: • Visitation will be offered seven days per week. • Visits must be scheduled in advance. • Physical contact, such as hand holding, is allowed regardless of vaccination status. Both the resident and their visitor must use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before and after physical contact. Embracing and hugging is allowed as long as both people wear masks. If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact, including touch, with their unvaccinated visitor(s) while all parties continue to wear well-fitting masks.

Indoor In-Person Visitation • Visits are restricted to specifically designated areas for visits.

Outdoor In-Person Visitation • Outdoor visits are preferred, even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, weather and logistics permitting.

End-of-Life and Compassionate Care Visits • Compassionate care visits are always permitted at Ballou. Compassionate care visits do not refer only to end-of-life situations.

COVID-19 Testing • RIDOH encourages COVID-19 testing of people visiting long-term care facility residents. Long-term care facilities that wish to test visitors may use antigen point-of-care test kits or encourage visitors to use traditional PCR testing available at www.portal.ri.gov.

Communal Dining and Activities • If all residents participating in an activity or meal are fully vaccinated, they may have close contact and not wear masks. • If unvaccinated residents are present, such as in a dining room or activity room, all residents should wear masks when not actively consuming food or drinks, and unvaccinated residents should physically distance in accordance with the most current state and federal requirements.

As always, wear a mask inside and use discretion outside, wash your hands, socially distance, and keep your social circle safe.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry B. Zeltzer, PhD

Executive Director