

## FAMILY VISITATION GUIDE AS OF 1/17/22

**Background/New Regulation:** *The following information from the NYS Department of Health was received by Valley Health Services at 4:47 pm on January 12, 2022.*

### **NYS Department of Health states:**

“...all nursing homes licensed and regulated by the New York State Department of Health must verify that visitors have received a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result one day prior to visitation for antigen tests and two days prior to visitation for NAAT (e.g. PCR) tests. All visitors may use either NAAT testing or antigen testing. This means, for example, that a test for a Sunday visit should be conducted no earlier than Saturday if it’s an antigen test or Friday if it’s a PCR test. Any PCR or antigen test used must either have Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or be operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.”

“For visitors who visit for multiple days, including a visitor who comes every day, proof of negative testing is required as often as feasible, at a minimum every third day (meaning at a minimum testing is required on day one, day 4, day 7, and so on).”

The Department of Health has sent Valley Health Services a limited supply of home test kits we are able to provide to visitors who arrive at the facility without a prior test result. These are to be used outside the facility and presented upon entry. These tests are on a first request, first serve basis. When this supply is exhausted, we will not be able to offer more until more are received from NYS.

The Department also allows us to test visitors, if practical. This is **not** practical, at this time, for the facility, due to limited staff that cannot be dedicated for this purpose to conduct the testing and the reporting and tracking requirements into the state testing system.

The Department of Health has issued one exception:

“Compassionate caregiving visitors, within the meaning of Public Health Law §2801-h, who are visiting in anticipation of the end of a resident’s life or in the instance of a significant mental, physical, or social decline or crisis of a resident.”  
Facility staff will notify the resident’s primary representative should a resident meet these criteria.

In the directive, the Department of Health stated, “The core principles of infection control and prevention should be adhered to at all times.” The Department of Health has been notified, through their Surge and Flex program which deploys staff to facilities, that VHS does not have the staff to review test results beyond normal business hours, Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Visitation is permitted at any time, but the test results **must be presented to and verified** by facility staff between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Please plan your testing to ensure you are able to visit at your desired time.

### **What you must do to comply with this directive:**

- Starting 1/17/22, before you can visit you are **REQUIRED**, by the Department of Health, to provide proof of a **NEGATIVE COVID** test conducted no more than 1 day before the visit, if the test is an *antigen-based test* or, 2 days before the visit if the test is *PCR based* (laboratory). You must bring this proof to the reception desk located on the ground floor of the facility. If bringing the test card, please place your name and the date on the card and place it in a sealed zip-lock bag. **The tests can ONLY be brought to the reception desk between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday.** This is the **ONLY** time staff is available to verify negative tests in order for you to visit.
- Once you provide the required proof for a visit, you may visit any time of day and for as long as you like, but VHS will **only accept and verify proof of the required testing MONDAY – FRIDAY between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.** You **cannot** arrive on an evening at 7:00 pm with proof of a negative test and expect to visit. **We must have the proof IN ADVANCE of any visit that will take place outside of the Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm hours.**
- You are then to follow the usual screening procedure in order to obtain your visitor sticker pass.
- **This new directive requires advanced planning, by you, if you plan to visit on a weekend or during evening hours.**

*Valley Health Services apologizes for the inconvenience.*