

Policies & Procedures for Nursing Home Visitation Post Covid-19 Vaccination

Woburn Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

Emefa Katamani

Healthcare Studies

Introduction

Salter Healthcare, founded in 1956, is a family owned and operated health care facility known for their excellence in the healthcare community. Salter has three post-acute rehabilitation centers located in Winchester and Woburn. Woburn Rehabilitation and Nursing Center offers intensive, effective rehabilitation/post acute medical services to individuals trying to gain the ability to live independently. They also provide skilled nursing programs that includes IV therapy, hospice care surgical aftercare, wound management and pain management.

Internship Project Objectives

To create and implement a policies and procedures that provide safe and effective family and friends visitation during the coronavirus pandemic. In addition patients were surveyed about the conditions of the facility.



Related Literature

Many wonder whether there will be changes to COVID-19 policies, in particular visitation, now that residents are fully vaccinated. Beginning, March 24th, families and friends will be able to visit their loved ones. Visits will be welcomed so long as there have not been any new cases on that particular floor or unit for 14 days as outlined in visitation guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH). This policy was recently revised as prior to this change visitation was not allowed when there were any positive cases in the facility. DPH will continue to modify these policies gradually as more communities become fully vaccinated, and as we learn more from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC, 2020)

Acknowledgements

Mrs. Joanne Shaw
Executive Director of Woburn Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
Site Supervisor

Materials and Methods

- Reviewed most recent guidelines from the CDC and Centers for medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Developed a survey to assess patient mental health before and after the pandemic.
- Updated previous policies and procedures based on current CDC and CMS guidelines.

Created policies and procedures for safe family and friends' visitations during coronavirus pandemic that includes:

- The use of mask/face shield during visitation.
- In-room visitations, will require that both patient and family/friend be fully vaccinated 14 days or more since their final dose in the vaccine series.
- Screening of all visitors must be done prior to entering visitation spaces.

Policy Letter for Visitation

March 24, 2021

Dear Family members and friends,

We are pleased to inform you of recent changes in visitation, dining and group activity requirements that have been put in place by the Department of Public Health in Massachusetts. With the progress that our State as well as our nursing centers have achieved with our endeavors to vaccinate as many residents and staff as possible, we have reached a point at which our restrictions from DPH has been loosened.

While DPH continues to encourage the use of virtual and outdoor visits as much as possible, a family member/friend who wishes to have an indoor visit with a resident may do so provided that the individuals and residents meet IN ROOM VISIT requirements.

Screening of all visitors must be done prior to bringing them to the visitation space. Visitors must be screened for close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days. If exposure has occurred, regardless of vaccination status, the visitor will not be permitted to visit with a resident.

IN ROOM VISITS may occur if and only if the resident and all visitors are fully vaccinated (14 days or more since their final dose in the vaccine series). Socially distancing does not need to be maintained in this situation. If the resident has a roommate, in-room visitation can only occur if the roommate is fully vaccinated. Visitors must always wear a mask, and residents are encouraged to wear a mask as well if possible.

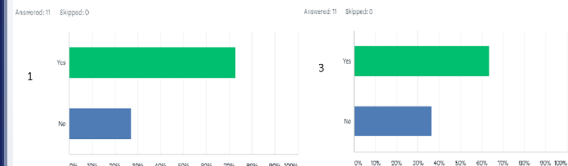
Small groups of residents who are fully vaccinated may dine together at a table without social distancing. Tables should still be 6 feet apart from one another and dining companions should be consistent across meals and days.

When there is a COVID-19 positive resident or staff on a unit, floor or care area, group activities should be suspended for residents on the unit, floor or care area until the unit, floor or care area has gone 14 days without a new COVID-19 positive resident.

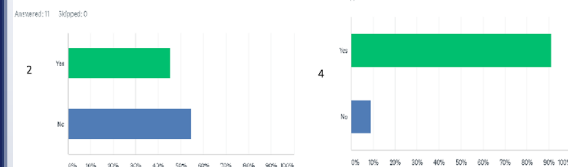
We at Salter Health Care are so happy to welcome you and look forward to seeing you in the near future. We encourage all our family members and friends to obtain your Covid 19 vaccinations to help in the fight to stop the spread.

Data & Observations

Did you receive one or more visits a week before the Coronavirus pandemic? Did you receive one or more visits a week when visitations were allowed during the Coronavirus pandemic?



Did you receive one or more visits a week during the coronavirus pandemic? Did you feel more social after visitations were allowed?



Implications of the Study

The main aim of this study was to safely resume family /friends visitations to nursing homes without spreading the virus.

This was made possible by using and following the guidelines provided by the CDC and CMS and includes the continuation of safe social distancing and being fully vaccinated.

Implementing these guidelines is helping residents come together with their loved ones which is vital in maintaining their mental health. As the study shows the residents received more visitations while following policy and were happier and healthier.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020) Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021). [Data CMS.gov](https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg/), data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg/

Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2021). [Guidance for People Who Are Fully Vaccinated against COVID-19](https://www.mass.gov/guidance/guidance-for-people-who-are-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19). www.mass.gov/guidance/guidance-for-people-who-are-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19.

"The First Choice in HealthCare". (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2021, from <https://www.salterhealthcare.com/>