What Should I Do If My Loved One’s Nursing Home Bans Visitors Due to Coronavirus?

Article By
Shana Siegel
Norris McLaughlin P.A.
Elder Care and Special Needs Law Blog

- Health Law & Managed Care
- Consumer Protection
- Coronavirus News
- All Federal

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Seniors and nursing home residents are at particular risk from the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Current estimates are that the death rate is likely to be at least 15% and perhaps substantially higher for this population. Many area nursing homes have decided to prohibit all visitors out of “an abundance of caution.”

American Health Care Association Recommendations

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) has recommended against a complete ban on visitors. Instead, the AHCA recommends restricting entry to immediate families or friends who need to visit for time-sensitive reasons, such as if the resident is on hospice. They also recommend a restriction on activities that can increase exposure such as routine social visits, tours, and group activities.

The AHCA has urged facilities to set up procedures to allow for remote communication so residents can remain in contact with their loved ones. Families
need to be prepared for visit restrictions.

**Important Steps You Can Take Now**

1. If the plan was for your loved one to be discharged home, communicate with facility staff about expediting those plans. Once restrictions are in place, discharges will likely be postponed.

2. Keep up to date with facility procedures and guidelines.

3. Make sure to visit while you can and bring your loved ones any items they might need in the event of quarantine.

4. Ask the nursing home their plans for alternative means of communication and support by providing electronic devices to your loved one where appropriate.

5. Develop back up plans for your loved one’s care in case a move becomes necessary. Remember those service agencies may become overwhelmed.

6. Ensure that the facility staff has appropriate emergency contact information.

If the nursing home does restrict visitors, you should demand regular updates regarding Coronavirus emergency plans, exposure, testing, and morbidity. Maintain proactive communication with your loved one and facility staff. Advocacy will be more essential than ever in the event of a quarantine.

©2020 Norris McLaughlin P.A., All Rights Reserved