



**Questions and DSS Responses from the Informational Call on  
Updated Statewide Visitation Guidance PIN 21-40-ASC  
September 3, 2021**

- Are vendors like plumbers, food delivery, AC repair, subject to the proof of vaccination or negative test requirements? What about if they don't have contact with residents? Is screening adequate?
  - Assuming they won't have interactions with residents and only limited interaction with staff, they aren't visitors for purposes of this PIN. They would have to wear a mask and be screened. If the vendor was going to be in the facility around residents for a long period of time, like major construction or renovation, then it would make sense to apply this and otherwise it would not.
- Does the PIN pertain to kids?
  - It does. You can be vaccinated if you are 12 years and older and if not, there would be the same testing requirements, or outside visits.
- Do people taking a tour of the community need to show proof of vaccination or a test result?
  - Yes, it would apply because they are the very definition of a visitor. They will likely interact with residents and have extended interaction with certain staff that provide information on fees, etc.
- Vaccination verification: Do providers need to keep a copy of the vaccination record, or can they just record that they saw one of the approved methods?
  - Recommend RCFEs don't keep a copy because then you're record keeping. The PIN doesn't state it is a requirement to keep a copy of it. Your record should be that you saw it and what proof was provided.
- How long do RCFEs have to keep these records?
  - Keep part of the resident's record or the employee's record as you normally would. For visitors keep for 90 days as a recommendation because the department hasn't provided that information. *(The Department will take that back to legal and provide further clarification.)* 90 days is probably good because it is to track an outbreak and you are only going back so far if that happens. You may need to ask for documentation at each visit if there isn't a way to know for each person or have a personal relationship with the visitors to know they have provided proof of vaccination.
- When DSS says visitation can happen at all times, the RCFE can still apply visitation hours, but they can't prohibit visitation. Even during cases visits are allowed. RCFEs can't close visitation and can't require all visits be outside because of resident rights' violations.
  - Local public health departments will tell RCFEs on occasion to close visitation with multiple positives. DSS asks that providers communicate with their regional office when those incidents happen to make sure the public health office is aware of DSS guidance and everyone works together.
- Will booster shots be available to residents and staff? If so, when, and how?

- Yes, they will be available to residents soon but final approval by the FDA hasn't been completed. Will likely need to work with your normal pharmacy to coordinate. There will not be a federally coordinated response like there was last time. CDC says people can get flu shots at the same time as the booster shot. You can try to do a flu shot/booster shot clinic. Have good records of when all residents and staff got their vaccinations because it will likely be 8 months after the last shot. Get in touch with your pharmacy partner to start the discussions. People who are immunocompromised can get a third dose now. Few residents will be in this category, but if you think they are talk to their doctor.
- If you don't have a relationship with a pharmacy then they can go to a local pharmacy or their health care provider.
- Are there any situations when staff members can remove their masks?
  - They should be wearing masks at all times unless they are alone in their office or when they are eating or drinking. Make sure to perform hand hygiene before eating.
- Are there any rules that prohibit residents leaving the community?
  - Residents are allowed to go out at any time.
- If a family member isn't vaccinated and they don't want to take a test, and they want to take their resident out and it will be unsupervised, what should RCFEs do?
  - Residents have the right to go out and they have the right to visit their families. Follow the guidance in previous PINs for outings, which would include screening upon return for exposure and if no exposure they would return to the community.
- If only visiting outside and don't have to present a proof of vaccination or negative test, can visitors remove masks and stop physical distancing?
  - Masking and physical distancing should still occur even outside if the visitors are unvaccinated. See previous guidance.
- Is requesting vaccination status a violation of HIPAA, and why or why not?
  - Providers are being mandated to require this information.
- Are all hospice and home care organizations required to track the testing/vaccination status of their employees? What about other groups that DSS exempts?
  - Those groups are already being checked by their organizations/agencies or have their own requirements for testing or vaccination.
  - Private duty aides that are more like a friend or family member will need to confirm whether they are working for a licensed agency and if not will have to follow the visitor guidance.
- Do kids have to be tested each time?
  - If it has been more than 72 hours and they are under 12 or unvaccinated then they will have to test. They may take advantage of the outdoor visits.
- If facilities run into testing shortages for antigen testing and are having issues with accessing free testing for staff, reach out to your regional office for help.
- Once there have been one or more COVID positive tests, the LPA is supposed to call the facility every day to check in.

- DSS reports they have been doing this to help provide assistance to licensees. They have received feedback that sometimes it can be overwhelming when the facility is trying to deal with an outbreak and these daily calls, but many find it helpful, especially if they haven't dealt with COVID yet. This is done to make sure the facility has everything they need. It should be a quick call and DSS reports they are reducing the timeframe.
- What type of tests are allowed?
  - PCR or antigen tests are acceptable.
  - Home tests are not acceptable since there is no way to verify who actually took the test.
- How do RCFEs handle unvaccinated residents who go out a lot and then want to mingle with other residents? And what about staff members who are unvaccinated and refuse to be tested?
  - These are the residents' homes and they have the right to leave and come and go just like staff do every day. This is why all the protocols are in place including staff testing.
  - You can take staff off the schedule if they are unvaccinated and refuse to be tested. You have to be in compliance with DSS and other guidance.