

**TO: Families, Friends and Individuals Living in Vinfen Group Homes**  
**FROM: Joseph Gomes, Senior Vice President**  
**DATE: November 18, 2020**  
**RE: Holiday Visitation Guidelines – Family Home Visits**

We recognize and understand how difficult it has been for family members and friends to remain connected to loved one's during this COVID pandemic. Specifically, the inability or limitations presented in visiting loved ones that reside in our homes has been very difficult for both the individuals and family/friends. These precautions were essential in the height of the pandemic to protect everyone's health and wellness and as we enter a second surge of COVID it continues to be necessary to follow the same best practices in order to ensure that the COVID 19 virus is contained and not spread among a very vulnerable population. As we begin the holiday season, we must be even more vigilant in protecting those who reside in our homes. We highly encourage staying safe during the holiday season and celebrating by practicing low risk methods of engagement. We are providing you with a copy of a letter that the Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders wrote that recommends methods and options for low-medium risk celebrations; and defines medium-high and very high-risk methods of celebration. We encourage you to choose a **low-medium risk method** of celebrating your holiday season. This will help us to contain the spread of COVID 19 among the residents and staff in our Vinfen homes.

Some of you may decide to visit friends or family or take a loved one home despite the higher risk to your family member as well as the greater community at large. We do however want you to understand the actions that will be required on your part and the actions that our staff will take if a resident decides with their family or loved ones to move forward with celebrating the holidays outside the home.

Family and Visitors Coming into Vinfen Homes: On the day of the holiday visits may be allowed following the visitation guidelines for that home location. Some Vinfen homes do not have the space to accommodate inside visitation. This was clearly communicated in October of 2020. At no time will food or a meal be shared by residents and visitors. Food may be brought for an individual and labeled and stored for later consumption by that person. Visitation may be prohibited on the holiday given the attention required by staff to prepare the holiday meal. This is highly likely in most circumstances. Our staff will not have the capacity to sanitize our settings and prepare a holiday meal. Please make sure to check with your family member's home for specific restrictions.

Client Visits Outside the home for the Holiday(s): We highly encourage, in the interest of the health and safety of all residents that visits outside the program do not occur this year. We will arrange for Zoom, Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp or GoogleDuo call between residents and loved ones as requested. It is in the interest of all residents and staff that we all commit to ensure that exposure to other community members is kept to a minimum; and thereby keeping everyone healthy and safe. If a resident decides to leave the program and visit a relative or friend for one of the holidays this year; we will implement the following steps for each of the category of visits identified.

- Low-medium risk – A virtual visit or short visit with a family or friend who has been isolating and following good infection control practices - (masks, social distancing, good ventilation). If this type of visit occurs the resident will come back to the GLE and will be monitored closely for symptoms by staff.
- Medium-high risk – Staying overnight or longer with immediate family/friends who isolate and follow good infection control practices – (masks, social distancing, good ventilation). Clients returning to the home will be required to quarantine/isolate for 72 hours minimum upon returning to the program and may be required to be tested. This includes remaining in their room, eating meals alone, and using their own bathroom. The program will be placed on enhanced monitoring status and visitors will not be allowed.
- Very high risk – The resident attends a large family gathering where participants are from more than one household; and/or visitors from out of state; and/or the resident travels out of state. **The individual is required to test for COVID 19 prior to returning to the program; and will be required to quarantine/isolate upon returning.** This includes remaining in their room, eating meals alone, and using their own bathroom. In addition, the client will be required to re-test for COVID 19 after 72 hours. **If documentation of a negative test cannot be provided before returning to their home the individual will be required to quarantine in the family home for 14 days.**

For the safety of your family member/loved one or yourself; and the members of the community of people that live in Vinfen homes; we ask that you take the time to make the best decision possible for everyone involved. Please contact the Program Director at your family member's home for additional support and with any questions you may have regarding these guidelines. These guidelines may need to be more restrictive in the future if the Governor imposes new restrictions or Vinfen determines that the safety of individuals and staff is at an elevated risk.

Thank you everyone and I wish you all a safe and healthy holiday season.