



**TO: Visitors and New Enrollments to Psychiatric Rehab (PRD) Group Living Environments (GLE)**  
**FROM: Jeanne Russo, Senior Vice President**  
**DATE: January 7, 2022**  
**RE: Visitation/New Enrollment Policy to PRD Residential Programs**

Guidance from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services related to visitation for Department of Mental Health funded programs has been evolving along with the status of COVID 19 infections in our communities. Unfortunately, we must yet again issue new guidance. We understand how difficult it has been for family members and friends to stay connected to loved one's during this pandemic of COVID 19. In particular the difficulties in visiting loved ones that reside in residential programs has been very burdensome for both the individual living in the residence and the family member or friend. This precaution has been necessary however, in order to ensure that the spread of the COVID 19 virus was contained. Vinfen residential programs will permit inside and outside visitation following the rules outlined below.

**Each residential program has the right to determine whether or not visitation can be permitted for residents, visitors and staff based on the appropriate safety, care infection control policies and procedures in place.** Vinfen programs will allow for in-person visitation without arbitrary limits on duration or frequency, which can occur in designated indoor or outdoor visitation space or the resident's room, with the appropriate safety, care, and infection control measures and policies in place.

- Visitation will be restricted if the person to be visited has tested positive, is quarantining, is presumed positive or if the visitor has tested positive. Visitation will also be restricted if there is a COVID-19 outbreak at the setting.
- Visitation will be restricted if the community infection rate is at 10% or greater. Visitation will occur in outdoor settings only.
- All programs will continue to augment in-person visitation by supporting attempts by friends, families, collaterals and guardians to visit remotely using technology, including phone and video calls.
- While visitor vaccination can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitors **will not be required to be tested or vaccinated (or show proof of such)** as a condition of visitation.
- Visitors must wear masks at all times indoors.
- Residents who are fully vaccinated may visit with loved ones who are fully vaccinated without maintaining social distancing or wearing masks outdoors only. Fully vaccinated individuals are defined as 14 days or more after their final dose - in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, the individual is fully vaccinated 14 days or more after their second dose. After a single dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine, the individual is fully vaccinated 14 days or more after the single dose. Booster shots are highly recommended.

#### *GLE Activities*

- Residents, regardless of vaccination status, may participate in GLE activities in the setting so

long as they are not currently isolated or quarantining due to infection, exposure, or new admission status (if they are not fully vaccinated).

- Fully vaccinated residents do not need to wear masks when dining or participating in congregated activities with other residents who are fully vaccinated.

#### *Screening Entrants*

- All GLE programs will continue to minimize points of entry, when possible. Each program will continue to ensure everyone arriving at the program is assessed for symptoms of COVID-19, and exposure to others with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection. Individual screening on arrival at the program will occur during which people report absence of fever and symptoms of COVID-19, absence of a diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 5 days and confirm they have not been exposed to others with SARS-CoV-2 infection during the prior 5 days. If the visitor had a diagnosis or exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in the prior 10 days, they will only be permitted to enter if they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to wear a KN95 mask at all times.
- Any visitors with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 infection, or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 5 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status) will not be permitted to enter.

#### *Screening current residents*

- Staff should assess all residents at least once per day for symptoms of COVID-19 infection, including fever.
- Remind residents to self-assess and to report any new respiratory symptoms.

#### *Admitting New Residents*

- New admissions may have a point-of care antigen or molecular testing performed at admission.
- In lieu of point-of-care antigen or molecular testing a quarantine process may replace rapid testing with – PCR testing and quarantine until PCR testing results are available.

#### *Staff Protocols*

- If staff experience signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 infection while they are working, they will notify the program supervisor.

#### *Additional Considerations*

- All Vinfen GLE programs will continue to encourage social distancing. Residents who are fully vaccinated or wear masks should social distance as appropriate.
- All Vinfen GLE programs will continue to evidence adherence to relevant guidelines from DPH and CDC regarding infection control and prevention to maintain a safe environment for residents and staff.
- If signs or symptoms of COVID-19 infection develop while an individual is on-site, the individual should put on a mask, if they are not wearing one already and move to an isolated area of the program. Notify the program director immediately.

- Programs will keep a daily log of names and contact information for employees, clients, visitors, and vendors.
- Programs will contact any entities that have staff regularly visiting their programs (e.g., contracted/per diem staffing agencies, pharmacy delivery organizations, food delivery services, cleaning agencies, etc.) to review and approve their protocols for identifying and preventing the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

*GLE Protective Measures – Vinfen Programs*

- Public health guidance recommends that all individuals, including fully vaccinated individuals, continue to wear masks in Vinfen GLE programs, **except in specific situations described in this document**, in which some individuals may not be fully vaccinated.
- Masks, such as surgical masks, will be used by clients (if not already wearing a mask) who show [symptoms](#) of illness to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- Surgical masks will be provided to and worn by all staff. Staff should not use cloth face coverings, which are not considered PPE.
- Monitoring of exposed personnel for fever or signs and [symptoms of COVID- 19 infection](#).
- Adherence to reporting protocols to public health authorities.
- Training and education of program personnel about preventing the transmission of respiratory pathogens such as COVID-19.

Thank you all for your understanding and patience during this difficult time. Please contact your local Program Director with any questions.