

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: Recent Surveyor Guidance Could Help Hospices Get Into Facilities

A new memo updating visitation guidelines for nursing homes may make it easier to see your patients in facilities - or it may not.

The seven-page memo from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services outlines broader reasons other than end-of-life situations that justify visits. "While CMS guidance has focused on protecting nursing home residents from COVID-19, we recognize that physical separation from family and other loved ones has taken a physical and emotional toll on residents," the agency says in the Sept. 17 memo to state surveyors. "CMS understands that nursing home residents derive value from the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they receive through visitation from family and friends. In light of this, CMS is revising the guidance regarding visitation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 PHE."



CMS outlines protections for indoor visits, such as limiting the number of visitors and where in the facility they go.

"Except for ongoing use of virtual visits, facilities may still restrict visitation due to the COVID-19 county positivity rate, the facility's COVID-19 status, a resident's COVID-19 status, visitor symptoms, lack of adherence to proper infection control practices, or other relevant factor related to the COVID-19 PHE," the memo allows. "However, facilities may not restrict visitation without a reasonable clinical or safety cause."

**What this means:** "Hospices may want to share this information with the facilities they partner with," suggests the National Association for Home Care & Hospice in its member newsletter. "As a reminder, this guidance is applicable to nursing homes but not facilities that are not regulated by CMS, such as assisted living facilities," NAHC adds.

The memo is at [www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh.pdf).