



There is so much going on with COVID-19, LeadingAge WA would like to share some important updates. We realize you have probably already seen this guidance, but there are some specifics in here we want to highlight.

Governor Inslee has released [new rules](#) for nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Washington State. These are effective today.

### **Rules that go into effect today March 10, 2020:**

Residents are allowed one visitor per day.

Visitors must be adults and the visit must take place in the resident's room. This does not apply to end-of-life situations.

All visitors must follow COVID-19 screening and follow reasonable precautionary measures. Precautionary measures include, but are not limited to, wearing personal protective equipment, social distancing, or visiting in designated locations. Screening includes:

- fever of 100.4 or higher, (This means actually taking the temperature with a thermometer and cleaning the thermometer between each use. A nurse is not required to take the temp.)
- cough, or difficulty breathing, or
- contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or are under investigation for COVID-19.

All visitors must sign into a visitor's log, which includes date, contact information, travel and illness screening, including temp. Owners and operators must retain that log for 30 days.

Employees and volunteers must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, as listed above, at the start of each shift.

People who live in nursing homes or assisted living facilities and who test positive for COVID-19 must be isolated away from other people.

Owners, operators, staff and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing protected and confidential health information, except as otherwise provided by law or with the resident's consent.

**These rules remain in effect until midnight on April 9, 2020.**

Please read the above proclamation from the Governor in its entirety, and share with your team, there are several RCWs that are being suspended; including for example, room change notices.

Department of Health just released new [guidance](#) today, please read this carefully. This guidance does include suggestions for social distancing as well as resident monitoring and staff monitoring, including keeping a log of other places your staff might also be working. This new guidance is in addition to documents released yesterday by Residential Care Services for [nursing homes](#) and [assisted livings](#).

RCS has developed a [website](#) with all of their up to date information. Please note: while these new guidelines issued today discuss the restriction of visitors, it does not discuss residents who might choose to continue to attend events or trips outside of the community. Because you may not restrict the outside movement of residents, it is advised that they be cautioned against attending public gatherings/events where they might expose not only themselves but friends and neighbors, placing them at greater risk given their ages and any possible underlying chronic conditions.

This is all subject to change as this virus continues to evolve, LeadingAge WA will keep you updated on these changes.

While not related to visitors, we obtained a clarification from RCS today regarding hospital admissions. Facilities have the right to refuse an admission/readmission from the hospital if you are unable to meet resident needs - lack PPE - to safely meet their needs. We suggest working with hospital partners to see if they'd be willing to provide PPE in order to accept the discharge.

We also received confirmation that RCS will follow the same limited survey/inspection criteria in Assisted Living communities as they are for skilled nursing. Inspectors/surveyors will not survey on-site for reasons other than infection control complaints, abuse and neglect complaints, and required annual surveys.

Late on March 9, CMS issued [revised guidance](#) for infection control and prevention of COVID-19 in nursing homes (QSO-20-14-NH REVISED). The guidance significantly alters recommendations related to visitors and encourages nursing homes to restrict, limit, or discourage visitors depending on the circumstances. One key factor is whether there are any confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the county or adjacent counties; the recommendations are more stringent in the affected areas. The guidance is applicable to nursing homes but can be adapted to other provider types. **However, since the Governors proclamation has enacted stricter visitation rules, these will take precedence over CMS guidance.**

LeadingAge WA is attempting to keep our communications limited to the most important updates, we realize you are extremely busy and overwhelmed with emails and calls regarding

this virus. Please be sure to check our [website](#) for **new** sample letters to residents, families and staff, and other updates, as well as [WA State Dept of Health](#) and [CDC](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, LeadingAge WA is here to assist you in any way possible.