



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

To: Conservators and Family Members of Individuals Served by DMHAS Facilities

From: DMHAS Facility CEO

Date: March 17, 2020

Subject: Change in Visitation Policy at DMHAS Facilities

In order to maintain patient and staff health related to the ongoing developments of the COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) is implementing a temporary Commissioner's Order pursuant to the [Governor's Executive Order 7C](#).

Per the [Commissioner's Order](#), which is effective immediately, all DMHAS-operated facilities will impose a complete 30-day ban on ALL visitors with the exception of the following:

- First responders, including Emergency Medical Services, law enforcement, firefighting and Emergency Management personnel
- Family members, domestic partners or other persons designated by a patient only when the Facility's Medical Director, a licensed physician or advance practice registered nurse has determined such patient to be at the end stage of life with death being imminent
- Any person authorized by law to oversee or investigate the provision of care and services
- Service providers who are required to do maintenance or repair necessary without delay for the Facility operations.

The restriction to visitors includes visits from private non-profit providers. Providers should use telephone or web-based communication to carry out necessary functions related to clients at inpatient facilities. Individuals who come to a DMHAS-operated facility and meet an exception noted above will be subject to a COVID-19 risk screening and may be refused access if they are deemed to be at-risk for COVID-19 based on the screening. Individuals admitted access will be required to use appropriate Personal Protection Equipment in accordance with CDC guidance documents while in the facility.

This is not a step the Department has taken lightly as we recognize the importance of family and friends to recovery. This temporary change is necessary to limit exposure to COVID-19 and to maintain the health and safety of the people DMHAS serves, many of whom have compromised immune systems that put them at greater risk for serious illness. The Department is working to enhance the capacity for patients to have access to telephones and other web-based communication so patients on inpatient units may continue to have contact with their loved ones. Mail services will also continue.

Staff will share information and support patients as the situation related to this disease outbreak continues to evolve. Please do not hesitate to call DMHAS Facility CEO if you have questions related to this change. You will be notified as soon as regular visitation is allowed at DMHAS facilities.

Thank you much for your understanding during this challenging time.