Updated guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities

July 1, 2021

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has implemented new requirements for the protection of residents, staff and visitors in long-term care facilities.

The increased precautions have been implemented because the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus is becoming more common in Colorado communities. The Delta variant transmits more easily than other identified variants and poses a greater risk to those who are not fully vaccinated, especially for individuals in congregate living settings like long-term care facilities.

As required by Colorado Public Health Order 20-20 long-term care facilities in El Paso County must implement the following enhanced safety measures:

**Increased testing**
Unvaccinated staff and residents will be tested more frequently to monitor for potential COVID-19 transmission. All staff and residents will be tested if there is a positive case identified within the facility.

**Requirements for visitation**
Everyone, including those who are fully vaccinated, will be required to wear masks over their nose and mouth during the entirety of any visit. Anyone who does not wear a mask will not be allowed to participate in the visit.

Outdoor visits are recommended. Indoor visits will be permitted as long as the facility does not have an active outbreak, with exceptions for compassionate care visits.

**Criteria to be labeled as an outbreak**
If one person tests positive, staff and residents will undergo surveillance testing. If a second positive case is identified, the facility will be considered an active outbreak and indoor visits will be suspended. Outdoor visits can still take place if the facility is in an active outbreak.

**Importance of vaccines**
The best prevention measure against all strains of COVID-19 virus, remains vaccine. Vaccine is free and widely available in El Paso County. Please visit elpasocountyhealth.org to find a vaccination provider near you.

**Additional resources**
Please contact El Paso County Public Health for additional information. Call (719) 578-3199 or visit https://covid19.colorado.gov/ltcf.