



**TO: Mill Street Residents & Family Members**  
**FROM: Mick Siems, Director**  
**DATE: November 26, 2021**  
**RE: COVID Update; Visitation Update**

Dear Mill Street Residents & Family Members,

Earlier this month, the Centers for Medicare Services (CMS) released updated guidance for nursing homes to follow related to visitation. The MN Department of Health recently released guidance that these same rules also apply to assisted living settings. Detail related to this new guidance can be found at [QSO-20-39-NH REVISED \(cms.gov\)](#). What follows is our interpretation of these guidelines and what you can expect related to visitation at Mill Street effective November 27, 2021.

CMS strongly encourages all visitors to become vaccinated. We believe in this as well and encourage all visitors to be vaccinated. We may ask you about your vaccination status, however, **visitors are not required to be vaccinated** (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation. If a visitor declines to disclose their vaccination status, it is expected that the visitor wear a face covering or mask at all times while within our building.

*Unvaccinated residents or visitors* - When either the resident and/or visitor is not fully vaccinated, outdoor visits are still the preferred method for visitation. Knowing that temperatures during the winter months are not conducive to meeting outside, unvaccinated visitors have a couple options. You may choose to pick up the resident and take them to an off-site location to visit. We strongly encourage that masks or a face covering be worn at all times during your visit. For those choosing to meet on-site, unvaccinated visitors are expected to wear a mask or face covering all times. This includes when you are in the privacy of the resident's apartment.

*Vaccinated residents and visitors* - When the resident and all their visitor(s) are fully vaccinated and the resident is not moderately or severely immunocompromised, they may choose not to wear face coverings or masks during their visit. Physical contact (touching, hugging, etc.) is also allowed during the visit. Please remember that visitors must wear a mask or face covering when in the hallways and elevators or any time when they may come in close contact with another resident.

*Visits with residents who have tested positive for Covid or are under transmission-based precautions or quarantine* - While not recommended, residents who have tested positive for Covid or are under transmission-based precautions (TBP) or

quarantine can still receive visitors. In these cases, visits should occur in the resident's apartment and the resident should wear a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated). Before visiting residents who are on TBP or under quarantine, visitors will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and precautions necessary in order to visit the resident. Visitors are expected to adhere to the core principles of infection prevention (hand hygiene, use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), maintaining physical distancing of at least 6 feet, etc.). Gowns, gloves, and facemasks will be provided/available along with instructions on appropriate use.

*Outbreak Testing* – Updated information related to the current Covid status within our building will be posted at our main entrance. Outbreak testing of all residents and staff will occur for a minimum of two weeks whenever a positive case of Covid is discovered. While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors will still be allowed in during this time. Visitors need to be aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation and adhere to the core principles of infection prevention. If the resident or their visitor would like to meet during outbreak testing, face coverings or masks should be worn at all times during visits, regardless of vaccination status, and visits should occur in the resident's apartment.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

*What are the options for a visitor to have a meal?* Our main dining room continues to be closed to visitors at this time. Residents do have the option of reserving our private dining room to enjoy a meal together with their visitors. There is also the option for the resident to order a meal (or meals) "To Go" with the meal being picked up and brought to the resident's apartment.

*Can one of Mill Street's community rooms be reserved for family gatherings during the holidays?* We are sorry, but out of caution, Mill Street's community room spaces are not available at this time for family get-togethers or gatherings during the holidays.

*What about access to a guest room?* At present, all of Mill Street's respite stay apartments are currently occupied and we expect that they will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. As a result we do not have a guest room available at this time.

*What about the vaccine mandate? Will Mill Street be requiring that all staff be vaccinated?* CMS guidelines currently require that all hospitals, clinics, and skilled nursing facilities adhere to a vaccine mandate requiring all employees be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption by January 4, 2022. Assisted living settings do not fall under the CMS mandate, though we are expected to follow the OSHA guidelines related to a vaccine mandate. These guidelines are currently under review in Federal Court with a decision expected in the very near future. More information on this will be shared once the Court's decision is published.

As always, the health and well-being of both our staff and our tenants continues to be our highest priority. If you have any questions or concerns, you are invited to contact me at 218-736-8590. Thank you!