



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
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*Commissioner*

November 23, 2020

**TO:** Administrators:  
Children's System of Care Congregate Care Treatment Programs  
Mommy & Me Treatment Programs  
Supervised Transitional Living Programs  
Youth Shelters

**FROM:** Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW  
Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** Home Pass and Holiday Visitation Guidance

**THIS GUIDANCE REGARDING HOME PASS AND HOLIDAY VISITATION IS MEANT TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) AND THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SERVICE (CDS), AND CURRENT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIVES.**

The virus that causes Coronavirus 2019 Disease ("COVID-19") is easily transmitted, especially in group settings. The State of New Jersey is currently experiencing a rise in COVID-19 cases and community spread. As the upcoming holiday season will include family visitation, it is imperative for the residents of congregate care treatment facilities and group living settings that their families/ friends and facility staff take precautions in order to provide a safe environment for everyone.

Because of the risk of the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect all members of the community, especially residents of congregate care treatment facilities and group living settings, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is providing the following guidance regarding home passes and visitation during the upcoming holiday season.

1. The DCF strongly recommends against families taking residents out of congregate care treatment facilities or group living settings for any reason, including holiday celebration events or gatherings. The CDC has indicated that a significant driver of the recent case increases is small family gatherings and has issued

[www.nj.gov/DCF](http://www.nj.gov/DCF)

recommendations for gatherings that include limiting participants to household members: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>.

2. The CDC and the New Jersey Department of Health recommend that individuals living in congregate care treatment facilities or group living settings avoid in-person gatherings with individuals with whom they do not live.

DCF is supporting this recommendation.

3. Instead of visits outside of the facility, for facilities that allow visitors, the DCF recommends visitation outdoors, or possibly indoors in facilities that meet the requirements for indoor visitation. Where possible, increased virtual communications in lieu of visitation should be used by facilities.
4. Facilities should encourage families that are requesting the resident to attend gatherings outside of the facility to follow CDC guidance for celebrating the holidays: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>. Facilities should remind residents to follow all recommended infection prevention and control measures when gathering during the holidays, including social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing a cloth face covering or face mask.
5. Families that decide to take residents out of their facilities should plan, in advance, of the event. Residents that leave their facilities must be quarantined upon their return to the facility in accordance with CDC guidance as follows:
  - a. Require all individuals who leave the facility for holiday gatherings/visits to quarantine for 14 days upon return to the facility.
  - b. All residents must be quarantined in separate rooms and kept separated from others in the facility for 14 days upon their return.

If the facility is not able to quarantine residents separately upon return, residents will not be permitted to leave on the home visit or in the event that they do leave, will not be permitted to return to the facility until the facility has space for individual quarantine.

- c. Facilities should develop and implement a plan in preparation for the return of residents leaving the facility for home visits, holiday visits/gatherings that includes the following:
  - i. Establish a process for families/ friends of residents to request a home visit before taking a resident out of the facility. Requests should be

honored up to the number of residents the facility can accommodate for a 14-day quarantine period.

- ii. Create a waiting list for those residents who request a home pass after the established limit has been reached. Residents that leave without the facilities' approval or on a waiting list may not be guaranteed readmittance to the facility at the end of their visit outside of the facility; please plan for such situations. Residents/families should be informed of this possibility.
- iii. Require the resident and family/ friend to certify that:
  - 1. They are aware of the possible dangers of exposure to COVID-19 for both the resident and family/ friend.
  - 2. They will follow masking, social distancing and hand hygiene practices pursuant to CDC and NJDOH directives; and
  - 3. They will notify the facility if anyone present at the holiday gatherings tests positive for COVID-19 or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of the resident's visit/stay outside the facility.
- iv. The facility should obtain a signed certification from each family/ friend and resident with a copy provided to the family/ friend and resident.