State health department orders healthcare facilities to restrict visitors

March 12, 2020

Effective today, the Louisiana Department of Health is requiring all licensed healthcare facilities in the state to restrict visitors to those deemed essential, vital or necessary to the care and well-being of patients, clients and residents. This action is being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19, commonly referred to as coronavirus, among the populations most vulnerable to the virus.

This prohibition will last for the next 30 days, ending on April 10, 2020 unless otherwise extended by the Department.

Visitors who will be allowed into each facility will be determined by those facilities after consultation with families and responsible parties. This does not extend to non-essential visitors in situations involving end of life care, as approved by the facility.

However, any visitor that meets the definition of a restricted person cannot enter a facility.

A restricted person is defined as someone who:

- Has signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat as assessed by the facility;
- In the last 14 days, has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or is under investigation for COVID-19 or has been or is currently ill with respiratory illness;
- Has been on international travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission of COVID-19; or
- Is residing in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring.

Facilities are required to provide alternative means of communication, including virtual visitations, and should consider assigning staff as primary contact for families and regular calls to keep families up to date.

The Department also recommends that all facilities consider limiting or restricting all elective or voluntary medical procedures for the next 30 days.