COVID-19 Update: Nursing Home and Assisted Living Visitation, Vaccination Appointment Booking

March 22, 2021

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VACCINATION APPOINTMENT BOOKING

While most of Ohio's current vaccine providers are quickly filling all vaccination appointments, some locations are seeing less demand for the vaccine. In response, Governor DeWine announced that local health departments and hospitals that are having a hard time filling appointments with individuals who are currently eligible for the vaccine may book appointments with anyone 16 years old and older.

Currently, anyone age 40 or older is eligible to receive the vaccine. Eligibility will drop to any Ohioan age 16 and up beginning on March 29.

CLEVELAND MASS VACCINATION UPDATE

As of today, more than 30,000 people have been vaccinated at the state-federal mass vaccination clinic at Cleveland State University's Wolstein Center. Appointments can be scheduled by visiting gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov. or by calling 1-833-427-5634 (1-833-4-ASK-ODH).

NURSING HOME/ASSISTED LIVING VISITATION

The Ohio Department of Health will issue an updated order related to assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The general visitation requirements will remain the same, including the requirement that visitors schedule appointments in advance, are screened at the door, and wear masks. Changes to the order include:

- Ohio is requiring that visitation be permitted whenever safety protocols can be met. Previously, visitation was permitted, not required;
- Vaccinated residents may have physical touch with their visitor while wearing a mask. Previously, touch was discouraged;
- Visits may occur in a resident's private room, as opposed to the previous requirement of a separate visitation area;
- 30 minutes should serve as the minimum amount of time for a visit. Previously, 30 minutes was the maximum time to visit.

The order will also expand the circumstances in which compassionate care visits should be granted.

In addition, the order will update nursing home and assisted living testing requirements to require the facilities to test vaccinated staff once per week and unvaccinated staff twice per week. The previous order made no distinction between vaccinated or unvaccinated staff.

"We must continue regularly testing for the virus," said Governor DeWine. "It's just good science, and it will help us identify cases early and prevent the spread. Further, if COVID is controlled, that means less disruption to visitation."

Certain circumstances, such as a facility outbreak, may necessitate that visitation be restricted on a case-by-case basis. Nursing homes must also continue following federal regulations from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

CASE DATA/VACCINE INFORMATION

In-depth COVID-19 data for Ohio: coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Ohio's central scheduling system: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

All vaccine providers: vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov

More vaccine information: coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language translation, can be viewed on the Ohio Channel's YouTube page.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.