

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor



HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND SAFETY BRANCH

CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF THE STATE
LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

Dear Resident, Family Member or Responsible Party,

There have now been positive tests for the coronavirus (COVID-19) in many nursing homes across our state. It is normal to have questions, feel uneasy or even scared. This is unprecedented in our lifetimes. The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the Department of Public Health have received many calls from residents and family members as they look for information about how to protect themselves.

We understand that this period of uncertainty and extra safety measures is incredibly challenging. The Governor, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health, has had to make extremely difficult decisions that impact all of you. It has not been easy to know what will come next, but I am thankful that at every step State Officials have kept the rights of residents at the forefront of their decision making and want to keep all parties informed.

Unfortunately, we are at a point in this pandemic that more extreme precautions need to be taken. This is not something any of us ever thought would happen in our long-term care community, but these are unprecedented times. We must take immediate action to prevent and delay further spread of COVID-19 to keep all residents and staff safe. These measures, outlined below, will impact residents throughout Connecticut.

In order to protect residents, the state will designate specific nursing homes for residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 and those who have not. Providing this physical distance is an attempt to concentrate the care and service needed to provide the highest level of care for each group of residents.

This means that some nursing homes will have to move residents to another nursing home. Residents who have tested COVID-19 positive will be transferred to a nursing home that has been designated as a COVID-19 positive home. If a nursing home has been designated as a COVID-19 positive home, residents who are negative or without symptoms will need to be transferred to a home that has been designated as a COVID-19 negative nursing home.



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This measured decision is the only option available at this time. This will be in effect for an unknown period of time, perhaps months, but will allow you to transfer back to your home when it has been determined that this separating of residents is no longer necessary. We know this is going to be overwhelming for both residents and families. As we have learned from other areas of the country, to address the pandemic and meet the health, safety and well-being of all residents, these necessary measures must be taken and begin as soon as possible.

If you or your loved one need to move to another room or nursing home, a team member from your nursing home will contact you directly. The rights, safety and well-being of the residents are always at the forefront of the State Official's decision making. This is an incredibly trying time and we are asking for your assistance keeping residents' well-being as the priority.

We will be setting up Zoom meetings for residents and families to have an opportunity to ask questions to representatives of the Department of Public Health and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We will be providing the dates and times for these meetings through your nursing home as well as on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman website (<https://portal.ct.gov/LTCOP>), Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CTLTCOP>) and the Department of Public Health website (<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH>).

If you have specific questions or concerns related to your nursing home, you can contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's office at: **860-424-5200**, or toll-free 1-866-388-1888.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and the Department of Public Health are here to support you through this very challenging time. Please remember it is normal to have questions, feel uneasy or even scared due to this unprecedented situation. Our offices as well as the care team members at your nursing home are here for you. Reach out, talk about how you are feeling and what you think might help you cope with all of this. We need to do things differently right now and will continue to offer support so that we can get through this together.

Sincerely,



Mairead Painter
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

And



Donna Ortelle, R.N., M.S.N.
Section Chief
Facility Licensing & Investigations Section

March 30, 2020