

ISDH Long Term Care Newsletter
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Today's Issue:

- **Visitation Guidance Update**

On Wednesday, July 16, 2020, Governor Holcomb extended Stage 4.5 of Indiana's "Back on Track" plan for at least another two weeks. In light of this announcement, facilities have asked if ISDH will modify its operative [Visitation Guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities](#) issued on June 29, 2020. ISDH has decided it will **not modify** the guidance because it has worked well so far and is consistent with the extension of Stage 4.5. However, in response to questions and communications, we want to clarify/amplify a few issues:

- Because each facility has responsibility for the safety and health of its residents, a facility may, in certain instances, temporarily impose stricter visitation limits than set out in the ISDH guidance. Before imposing stricter limits, a facility must (a) determine the limits are clinically necessary due to increased COVID-19 cases in the facility or surrounding community, and (b) notify and consult with ISDH about the facility's specific situation and concerns.
- The operative guidance states that by July 17, facilities must provide four hours of visitation "per day." This "per day" guideline does not require four hours of visitation on each weekend day (Saturday and Sunday). Rather, the guidance requires at least four hours of visitation for the entire weekend, e.g., on one day or split over both. Of course, facilities are free and encouraged to provide four hours or more of visitation on each weekend day in accordance with ISDH guidance.
- Outdoors currently remains the preferred venue for visitation. However, for assorted reasons some residents – e.g., those in memory care or hospice, or bedridden, or seriously disabled – cannot take part in outdoor visitation. ISDH **strongly** urges providers to facilitate indoor visitation for these residents, even if indoor visitation is not generally available on a given day. At this phase of the pandemic, residents having personal contact with their families and loved ones is as vital as staff wearing masks and other COVID-19 precautions.

- Some localities have ordered or recommended stricter visitation limits than set out in the ISDH guidance. Facilities in those localities should, of course, adhere to such orders and recommendations.