

Serenity Living Center

Policy on Essential Caregivers

July 24, 2020

PURPOSE:

Serenity Assisted Living & Memory Care recognizes the importance of social distancing and physical separation to help keep residents safe from exposure to COVID-19. Serenity Assisted Living and Memory Care also acknowledges the unintended consequences of prolonged social distancing and isolation on a resident's overall health and well-being, particularly with residents who have had friends, family, or caregivers participate actively in their care prior to the pandemic. The following protocols will be utilized to address the desire for essential caregivers effective **Monday, August 3rd**.

*****Essential Caregivers will be noted as "EC" in the policy.***

Note: If at any time there is a concern about community exposures to COVID-19, or exposures of staff, residents or families to COVID-19 within our facility, we will be suspending this policy until further notice.

1. Essential Caregiver (EC) Eligibility:

Residents/Resident Representatives requesting an essential caregiver need to meet these qualifications:

- The use of an EC to assist with the mental health and quality of life of a resident.
- If a designated EC becomes unavailable due to exposure or symptoms of COVID-19, or other unforeseen circumstances, an alternate EC may be designated upon approval from a Serenity Nurse and the new designated EC must abide by all policies and procedures of Serenity Assisted Living and Memory Care.

2. Requesting Essential Caregivers

Residents/resident representatives can request an essential caregiver using the following process:

- Complete the Essential Caregiver Designation Form; return to a Nurse at Serenity Assisted Living.
- Take a headshot photo of Essential Caregiver and provide to Serenity Nurse.
- Approval for an Essential Caregiver Designation for a client will take 24-48 hours on business days only. *(This is where you identify the staff member point of contact for requesting EC, how to contact the staff member, how the staff member will process the request, length of time before request will be considered/granted.)*

3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ECs must wear the same level of PPE for the resident visit that staff are required to wear.
 - At minimum, this includes a face mask and protective eyewear (eyewear must cover the front and sides of the eye area). PPE shall also be worn in the hallways/corridors.
- The facility will not provide PPE to ECs.
 - If an EC arrives without required PPE to a scheduled visit, their visit will be forfeited for that day and may not be eligible for future visits

4. Facility Essential Caregiver Screening/Check in Process

- Essential Caregivers (EC) must go through our essential caregiver orientation training, which includes review of proper infection control, screening, use of personal protective equipment, visitation terms, and triggers for pausing EC visits, prior to their first visit.
- All EC must enter the building through designated door in each building, and immediately check in with staff to go through screening prior to each visit.
- All ECs must perform hand hygiene at screening station before proceeding to visitation.
- All ECs will be screened by staff for temperature and other signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- At each visit, ECs will sign and date a visit form indicating their understanding of the EC requirements and rules.

5. Essential Caregiver Visits

- All visits by ECs must be scheduled. “Walk-ins” will not be permitted.
- Scheduling visits: The following system will be utilized for ECs to schedule visits:
 - SignUp Genius Link
- After screening by Serenity staff, ECs must wear the appropriate PPE and go directly to client’s apartment.
 - Visits can only be between the resident requesting the EC and the EC, and not include other residents or staff in the facility.
- Visits shall be limited to no more than 3 hours in duration.

5. Triggers for Pausing Caregiver Visits

- EC visits will be prohibited during a resident 14-day quarantine – exceptions may be made for compassionate care visits
- EC visits will be prohibited if a resident is COVID-19 positive or symptomatic – exceptions may be made for compassionate care visits.
- Visiting rights may be restricted or revoked for individual EC’s if communicated safety measures are not followed.
- Visiting rights will be revoked for the EC if they are COVID-19 positive or are exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19, until one of the following criteria are met:

Test-based strategy. Exclude from visits until:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **and**
- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

6. Concerns with Essential Caregiver Policy can be directed to:

- Denise Tollefson at 218-477-7254
- Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care at 651-431-2555 or 1-800-657-3591 to request advocacy services.