




**State of Florida**  
**Department of Children and Families**

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Hospital Administrators  
From: Rodney E. Moore, LMHC, Assistant Secretary for SAMHSA   
Date: March 16, 2020  
Re: Suspension of Visitation at all State Mental Health Treatment Facilities due to COVID-19 epidemic

In response to the Governor's State of Public Health Emergency Declaration 20-51 due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the Governor's Executive Order 20-52 just released, all visitation at DCF's mental health treatment facilities should be suspended immediately and extend 30 days through April 15, 2020.

Every facility must prohibit the entry of any individual, to the facility except in the following circumstances:

1. Family members, friends, and visiting residents in end-of-life situations
2. Hospice or palliative care workers caring for residents in end-of-life situations
3. Any individuals providing necessary health care to a resident
4. Facility staff
5. Facility residents
6. Attorneys of Record for a resident in an Adult Mental Health and Treatment Facility for court related matters if virtual or telephonic means are unavailable
7. Representatives of the federal or state governments seeking entry as part of their official duties, including but not limited to, long-term care ombudsman program, representatives of the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health, the Department of Elder Affairs, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, a protection and advocacy organization, the Office of Attorney General any law enforcement officer, and any emergency medical personnel.

Individuals seeking entry to the facility under the above section will not be allowed to enter if they meet any of the screening criteria listed below.

1. Any person infected with COVID-19 who has not had two consecutive negative test results separated by 24 hours
2. Any person showing presenting signs of symptoms of, or disclosing the presence of a respiratory infection, including cough, fever, shortness of breath or sore throat.
3. Any person who has been in contact with any person(s) known to be infected with COVID-19, who has not yet tested negative for COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
4. Any person who traveled through any airport within the past 14 days.
5. Any person who traveled on a cruise ship within the past 14 days.

The goal is to decrease inadvertent spread of COVID-19 virus from referring community jails and acute care hospitals to patients and employees in our forensic and civil facilities.

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

The following documentation must be kept for any and all visitation within a facility:

1. Individuals entering a facility subject to the screening criteria above may be screened using a standardized questionnaire or other form of documentation.
2. The facility is required to maintain documentation of all non-resident individuals entering the facility. Documentation must include:
  - a. Name of the Individual
  - b. Date and time of entry
  - c. The documentation used by the facility to screen the individual showing the individual did not meet any of the enumerated screening criteria, including the screening employee's printed name and signature.

A communication memo has also been provided to share with family members explaining the necessity for the suspension of face to face visitation and providing guidance on alternatives through alternative means such as telephonic and tele-conferencing.

The CDC is recommending increasingly stringent isolation criteria for the community to limit the spread of the epidemic. COVID-19 is a highly contagious and is best managed by physical isolation for weeks and minimizing random person-to-person spread, in addition to increased handwashing and other preventative health practices.

As a result, the suspension of visitation is an initial effort to reduce the opportunity for exposure by outside individuals and will be re-evaluated in 30 days. Additional steps are under review and may be taken to further reduce risk to our residents and staff.

Please contact me if you have further concerns or questions related to this unprecedented event and the steps being taken and/or under review to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our team and those we serve.