



State of Connecticut
Department of Aging and Disability Services
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

4/11/2020

Dear Resident, Family Member or Responsible Party,

I know you have received several letters from me, but this is a very fluid situation and the guidance changes as we learn more about this virus. As guidance develops, I will write to you, providing updates about the measures the State is taking to protect the rights, health and safety of nursing home residents. In the March 30, 2020 joint letter with the Department of Public Health (DPH), we explained that there have been positive tests for the coronavirus (COVID-19) in many nursing homes across our state.

Throughout this pandemic the Governor, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health, has had to make difficult decisions. I am thankful that they have kept the rights of residents, including first and foremost the right to appropriate medical care, at the forefront of this decision making. We have every indication that the rights, health, safety and wellbeing for Connecticut's nursing home residents remain a priority.

Providing physical distancing to slow the spread of the virus, as well as appropriate medical services for nursing home residents, are an essential part of the State's plan during this public health crisis. In order to meet the level of care some residents may need, designated nursing homes will provide specialized services and therefore be identified as COVID Recovery Facilities. COVID Recovery Facilities will have access to higher levels of care and services in order to treat residents with increased needs. All other homes will continue providing care in a traditional manner which may include the care of COVID-19 positive residents who do not require specialized care and services. These homes will incorporate practices to provide physical distancing which may include, for example, separate wings of the facility.

There are normal procedures for transfers or discharges on both a voluntary and involuntary basis for all nursing homes. Normally a nursing home is required to give you, your guardian, conservator or legally liable relative a written notice, and develop a plan with you, before a transfer from one room to another in the facility. This also normally applies before a transfer or discharge from one facility to another.

There are very few exceptions to this rule. One exception is infection control or other health/safety concerns that could impact or endanger other individuals in the home. If that is the case, under existing law, you may be transferred to another room with the right to notice and consultation after the fact, and otherwise all existing regulations and procedures would apply.

Under the current public health crisis, there may be situations involving a transfer to another facility where current procedures are waived or are done as soon as they can be. These would be related only to transfers involving the COVID-19 Recovery Facilities and be in consultation with your doctor, the Hospital, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and DPH.

Otherwise, the rules and process involving a transfer to another nursing home are unchanged and remain in place.

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If you are going to be asked to transfer from your room or nursing home, someone will discuss this with you. All transfers will be in consultation with your doctor and moves will be coordinated by the care team at your nursing home.

If the room change or transfer is due to infection control issues or other health/safety concerns that may impact other individuals in the home who could be endangered, you may be transferred with the official legal notice given after the fact. All other normal procedures remain in place.

The nursing homes that are designated as COVID Recovery Facilities may have residents who have tested negative and wish to move to a traditional nursing home or unit that is COVID-19 unknown. Residents who have tested COVID-19 negative and have elected to transfer will go to a quarantined section of the traditional nursing home for 14 days. Again, all transfers will be recommended or in consultation with the doctor and moves will be coordinated by the care team at your nursing home.

We understand that this period of physically distancing will remain in effect until it is deemed that the risk of transmission has been remedied. At that time, there will be a process to facilitate how residents can return to their nursing home of origin.

I know this is a great deal of information, potentially leaving you with more questions and that is very understandable. Throughout this process the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program as well as all of the State agencies involved will be here to provide you with the most up to date and accurate information.

I will continue to host Facebook live events Mon, Wed and Fri. at 5:30 pm.

To watch or ask questions, please visit the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program's Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/CTLTCOP>.

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

Please remember it is normal to have questions, feel uneasy or even scared. 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. We need to do things differently right now but will continue to offer support so that we can get through this together.

Sincerely,



Mairead Painter

State Long-Term Care Ombudsman