

Louisiana Health Alert Network (LA HAN)--Message on Nursing Home Visitation

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Message Urgency: **HIGH**

This is a message from the Louisiana Department of Health Emergency Operations Center (LDH EOC) for the Louisiana Health Alert Network (LA HAN) recipients. This message is from Dr. Joseph Kanter, Interim Assistant Secretary of the Office of Public Health, regarding **Visitation in Nursing Homes**. Please share and distribute with relevant stakeholders and partners through your own distribution channels.

On November 13, Louisiana reported a record number of nearly 3500 new cases of COVID-19. Like many other states throughout the U.S., Louisiana is now experiencing a statewide increase in COVID-19 cases. This increase is occurring in every region and nearly every parish throughout the state. Increased community transmission raises the risk of introducing COVID-19 into nursing homes. When high levels of transmission are occurring, nursing home staff and visitors are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 in their communities and then spread the infection to those in the nursing home. In order to prevent COVID-19 introductions into nursing homes, LDH recommends that nursing homes take the following important actions:

- Nursing homes should maintain strict adherence to core infection prevention principles, including systematic symptom screening and enforcement of masking for all who enter the facility.
- Nursing homes should conduct COVID-19 testing of all staff members at least weekly in strict accordance with [LDH](#) and [CMS guidelines](#).
- Outdoor visitation poses a lower risk for transmission than indoor visitation. Because of increased levels of community transmission, LDH strongly recommends providing opportunities for outdoor visitation in lieu of indoor visitation when feasibly practicable.

For additional information, please contact your [Regional Office of Public Health](#) or the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section's Healthcare Associated Infections team at InfectionControl@la.gov.