



## Ascension Living

May 14, 2020

Dear Ascension Living Residents and Family Members,

Thank you for your understanding and support during the past few months. We never could have imagined how COVID-19 would change our lives. Each day, I continue to be inspired by all the support you are giving your loved ones in our communities, as well as the support you are giving each of our associates as they continue to provide compassionate and empathetic care.

Our communities across the nation have in place necessary precautions to respond to positive case notifications, if and when they happen. In the next few weeks, we will be conducting testing of all residents and staff in our skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities across the U.S. Many of our communities have already done so. If your loved one is in one of those communities, you would have been notified. If your loved one resides in a community who is planning to conduct testing soon, rest assured that their responsible party will be informed.

Through proactive testing, our goal is to identify asymptomatic individuals who are positive for the virus, which will help us in our ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Any resident with positive tests or who are symptomatic will be treated in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state and local health departments. Any staff member who tests positive will adhere to established infection control protocols with guidance from the CDC and will remain off work until cleared.

As states begin to lift stay-at-home orders, we will be making some adjustments. Our teams are busy preparing for how our communities will operate once the number of COVID-19 cases reflects that adequate testing is in place and states begin to see a downward trend. We believe our reopening plans are just as crucial to the health of our residents as our existing COVID-19 prevention plans because health and safety will continue to be our top priorities. While we understand your desire to have all the restrictions lifted quickly, your experience with our communities may continue to be modified for a period of time after each state's stay-at-home order is lifted.

I have attached our color-coded reopening plan, which outlines a phased approach to easing us back into a "new normal" while also remaining focused on safety. This is a fluid document that will be adjusted as required based on guidelines released by the CDC, CMS, and state and local health departments. We may need to revert to precautions as shown in an earlier phase based on possible resurgence of infections. Life in our communities most likely will not return to normal in our green phase until there's a vaccine or widespread, effective treatment for COVID-19. In addition, you will find a more detailed description of what will be allowed during the Orange - high risk phase. We will share the Yellow - moderate risk guide as we approach that phase.



## Ascension Living

Data has shown COVID-19 disproportionately impacts individuals over 65 years old worldwide. To operate safely in this new era, we must work to stay ahead of COVID-19 to protect the most vulnerable -- our residents and your loved ones. To do that, we will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC, CMS, state and local health departments, as well as our operational and clinical specialists.

In the meantime, we will maintain our current measures to protect our residents and associates. Please take a few minutes to review the measures in place:

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- Require universal masking of all associates and essential healthcare providers.
- Request that residents wear cloth face coverings when in hallways and public spaces within the community.
- Take proactive steps with our distributors and suppliers to ensure access to supplies.

### **Infection Prevention**

- Use a designated unit in our skilled nursing facility to safely admit new residents and care for those who have symptoms related to COVID-19. Those residents are cared for by designated healthcare personnel who do not interact with other residents.
- Continue with ongoing sign and symptom checks on residents. Conduct more proactive tests to best identify asymptomatic residents and associates, and prevent negative outcomes.
- Regularly conduct stringent deep cleaning.
- Maintain comprehensive screening of all who enter our community.
- Limited personal deliveries to designated areas.
- Beauty shops and other amenities closed.

### **Social Distancing**

- Continue with in-room dining experiences instead of communal dining.
- Offer unique activities that ensure social distancing through in-house TV broadcasts or other methods (i.e., no group activities).
- Provide exercise classes through our in-house TV system in some communities.
- Continue to offer virtual visits with loved ones and friends. These can be scheduled by having family members call the community.
- Request Independent Living residents to avoid traveling off campus in an effort to keep both the resident and their fellow campus residents safe.

### **Visitation**

#### *Skilled Nursing, Assisted Living and Memory Care residents*

- Continue with restricting all visitors, except for extreme compassionate visitation and end-of-life care visitors approved by Administration.
- Single entrance/exit at each community. Visitors must stop at the front desk to go through screening upon entry, wear a face covering and comply with hand-washing requirements.



## Ascension Living

### *Independent Living*

- Continue with restricting all visitors, except for essential caregivers, and end-of-life care visitors approved by Administration.
- Single entrance/exit at each community. Visitors must stop at the front desk to go through screening upon entry, wear a face covering and comply with hand-washing requirements.
- Visits are restricted to individual apartments only (no common space visits).
- Assistance with delivery services (groceries, medications, etc.) will continue to be available.
- All deliveries are to be made to the front desk and residents can pick up or we will deliver to the apartment.

If we change any guidelines in the coming weeks to comply with local, state and federal guidelines, we will contact residents and families. We will continue to rely on experts for guidance on the most effective measures to help keep our residents and associates safe, healthy and connected during this historic time. We are blessed to have talented and caring associates focused on providing excellent care while following strict guidelines.

If you have any questions, please send them to [AscensionLiving@ascension.org](mailto:AscensionLiving@ascension.org). Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Danny Stricker  
President  
Ascension Living



# COVID-19 operational and safety precautions for Ascension Living residents and visitors

Each community may have individual variations to the following plans based on state and/or local government requirements and guidance. For more information and/or clarification please reach out to your community Executive Director.

AL = Assisted Living IL = Independent Living MC = Memory Care SNF = Skilled Nursing Facility

## What risks would make the community go backward?

- Sustained rise in the region's positivity rate
- Increase in hospital admissions
- Hospital capacity not able to handle surge
- Outbreak threatens health of the region

### Red — very high risk *state/local governments are closed*

- No visitors (exception for end-of-life situations)
- Essential associates and providers only
- Universal masking
- In-room dining instead of communal dining
- No group activities
- Common areas unavailable for use
- Social distancing required
- Beauty shops and other amenities closed
- (SNF/AL/MC) Routine signs and symptoms checks on residents
- Stringent three times daily disinfecting of high-touch areas
- Screenings per CDC/CMS guidance
- (IL) In-room housekeeping services suspended
- Single entrance/exit at each community
- (IL/AL/MC) No move-ins allowed
- Limited personal deliveries to designated areas
- (SNF) Admissions accepted on designated admission units only
- Essential appointments/transportation only (i.e., physician visits)
- Virtual tours/activities/communications/physician visits provided
- (IL) Optional virtual wellness checks

### Orange — high risk *May 15-June 15; dependent on federal/state/local government guidance*

- No visitors (exception for end-of-life situations)
- Universal masking
- (IL/AL) 14-day self-isolation for new move-ins required (unless tested negative within the prior three days)
- Screenings — continue to follow the CDC/CMS guidance
- Beauty shops and other amenities closed
- (IL) In-room housekeeping services will resume with proper PPE
- Single entrance/exit at each community
- Stringent three times daily disinfecting of high-touch areas
- Common areas unavailable for use
- (IL) Optional virtual wellness checks
- (SNF/AL/MC) Routine signs and symptoms checks on residents
- No group activities
- In-room dining instead of communal dining
- Social distancing required
- Essential appointments/transportation only
- Limited personal deliveries to designated areas
- Virtual tours/activities/communications/physician visits provided
- (IL/AL/MC) Move-ins allowed with precautions
- (SNF) Admissions accepted on designated units — units will continue to operate using RED guidance

### Yellow — moderate risk *June 15-TBD; dependent on federal/state/local government guidance*

- Limited visitors (will follow CDC/CMS guidance)
- Screenings — continue to follow the CDC/CMS guidance
- Social distancing encouraged
- Masking highly encouraged
- Hand hygiene required
- Designated entrance/exits reopened for use
- (SNF/AL/MC) Routine signs and symptoms checks on residents (may be considered for reduction)
- Resume routine appointments/transportation/outings  
Residents must be screened each time upon returning and highly encouraged to practice social distancing and masking while out
- Limited group activities with social distancing (6 feet apart)
- Limited communal dining with social distancing (6 feet apart)
- Common areas available for use with social distancing
- Virtual tours/activities/communications/physician visits encouraged whenever possible?
- Beauty shops and other amenities reopen with limitations and precautions
- (IL/AL/MC) Tours/move-ins resume with precautions
- (IL/AL) 14-day self-isolation required for new move-ins (unless tested negative within the prior three days)
- Personal deliveries resume with precautions
- (SNF) Admissions accepted on designated units — units will continue to operate using RED guidance
- Three times daily disinfecting of high-touch areas
- (IL) Optional virtual or in-person wellness checks

### Green — low risk

- Pre-COVID normal operations



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## Compassionate care is safe care

**Orange – high risk** *May 15-June 15; dependent on federal/state/local government guidance*

**We are committed to keeping you safe while you're receiving care with us. Rest assured that we have implemented safeguards to minimize the exposure risks related to coronavirus (COVID-19) for our residents and our caregivers. Please contact your local community for more information.**

**Screening.** All our associates are screened before they come to work and during their shift, using screening tools designed to ensure they are healthy and symptom-free before entering our communities or providing care. Routine signs and symptoms checks on residents continue.

**Cleaning and disinfecting.** Our environmental services teams perform rigorous disinfecting measures at all our communities. In our Independent Living communities, in-room housekeeping services will resume with personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Visitor restrictions.** In March, at the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), we enacted visitor restrictions to protect our residents and staff. As our communities begin to reopen for tours and new admissions, we are now revising these policies. As a result, we will be relaxing some of these restrictions to allow for new admissions while maximizing the safety of residents. We will continue to only offer a single entrance to enter and exit through. In addition, our teams will help coordinate window visits, virtual visitations and limited personal deliveries. Please contact your local community for information on specific visitor guidelines.

**Social distancing.** In accordance with CDC and CMS recommendations, all approved visitors and staff are asked to wear a cloth face covering when coming to our communities. Residents will need to wear cloth masks if they need to be out of their unit and unable to maintain social distancing. Our staff will continue to adhere to universal masking. And, we continue to practice social distancing (six feet apart).



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**New admission procedures.** We're taking special care to welcome new residents into our communities who can benefit from our care and service during this time. New admissions into our skilled nursing facilities will be accepted to a designated unit and monitored for 14 days. New retirement community residents will need to self-isolate in their new unit for 14-days, unless they can supply proof that they tested negative within the prior three days.

**Tours.** We are happy to arrange for a personalized virtual tour, so there is limited interaction with others.

**Dining, activities and amenities.** We will continue to offer in-room dining experiences to all residents. Residents will find joy through personalized activities. While the beauty shop remains closed, we are busy planning for the grand reopening.

**Appointments and transportation.** Essential appointments will be allowed. When transportation is required, our team will coordinate to ensure all safety measures are followed. Independent Living residents can use Ascension Online Care to benefit from virtual urgent care.

**Call ahead when possible.** We ask that you not arrive unannounced at our communities. By calling ahead, you can learn in advance about our safety procedures that must be followed for each community and schedule time to visit. We want to help keep you safe.

**What risks would make the community go backward?** Sustained rise in the region's COVID-19 positivity rate, increase in hospital admissions, hospital capacity not able to handle surge and an outbreak that threatens health of the region.