

# ESSENTIAL FAMILY CAREGIVER

The Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affected those who live in nursing facilities such as Northern Lakes. One of the many detrimental effects from this pandemic was the psychological toll from social and emotional isolation. The abrupt and ongoing separation from those who provide both care and companionship to our residents was, in many cases, as dangerous as the virus itself. With guidance from the Indiana Department of Health, Northern Lakes has created and will maintain an EFC Program to ensure residents can continue to receive the person-centered care they need in the event of visitation restrictions related to Covid-19 or other declared emergencies.

*IMPLEMENTATION  
PACKET JULY 2021*



July 25, 2021

Dear Family Members:

Although social distancing and physical separation are still important to keep residents safe, we are taking steps to combat the unintended consequences of prolonged social isolation and to maintain overall health and wellbeing.

As of this date we are implementing our Essential Family Caregiver Program. Our goal through this program is to help our residents who are missing care previously provided by a loved one or outside caregiver prior to the visitor restrictions required by state and federal guidelines due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This program is a narrowly defined exception to visitor restrictions which may allow certain caregiving services to be provided by a personal caregiver from outside our facility.

We recognize the critical role family members and other outside caregivers, such as friends, volunteers, private personal caregivers, often have in the care and support of residents.

If you would like additional information about the Essential Family Caregiver Program, please text your request to (260) 668-0172, email [deesmallman@northernlakesnursing.com](mailto:deesmallman@northernlakesnursing.com), or call (260) 665-9467 Ext. 722.

We encourage you to read on Essential Caregivers to fully understand the guidance we are required to follow and ensure we are protecting the health and safety of all who live and work here. Below are some of the criteria we will use as we evaluate and designate Essential Caregivers in our settings:

- Essential Caregivers will be determined based on consultation/assessment with the Administrator, Director of Nursing & Social Service Director.
- Residents will be consulted about their wishes to help determine whom to designate as an Essential Caregiver. If the resident desires to designate more than one Essential Caregiver based on their past involvement and needs, we will work cooperatively with them to determine who will serve as essential caregivers and the schedule for those visits.
- Essential Caregivers can be family members, outside caregivers, friends or volunteers who provided regular care and emotional support to the resident prior to the pandemic.

- Essential Caregivers may provide support up to two hours per day or until caregiving tasks are completed. Please know Northern Lakes may establish limits of the number of Essential Caregivers in the building or the length of the visits based on the need to keep residents and staff safe.
- Essential Caregivers will be actively screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the building and must wear all necessary personal protective equipment while in the building. They must also perform frequent hand hygiene and maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet with staff and other residents while in our building.
- Rapid Covid testing is strongly encouraged and recommended.
- Essential Caregivers will limit their movement in our building, providing care and support in their loved ones' room or a designated space in our building.
- Essential Caregivers must inform us if they develop a fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of a visit to a resident.

With this new guidance, it is important to know that Essential Caregivers cannot take a resident out into the community except for essential medical appointments, must not visit a resident during a resident's 14-day quarantine, and must not visit when a resident is symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19, unless the visit is for compassionate care. Please know we do retain the right to restrict or revoke Essential Care status if the designated person fails to follow our established policies and protocols.

Realizing both the potential benefits and risks of allowing additional essential caregivers into the building, we will carefully consider the current status of COVID-19 in our setting and local communities prior to designating Essential Caregivers and as we monitor the program.

We know that you share our concerns about efforts to keep residents in our facility safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we welcome this opportunity to make necessary exceptions to the visitor restrictions, we must all continue to be vigilant. If, at any time, it is deemed unsafe for Essential Caregivers to enter the building—due to positive covid cases in our facility, either within our walls or in the broader community—it is our obligation per guidelines to revisit and reassess the program.

We recognize the concern you may have that not everyone will be able to serve as an Essential Caregiver. We also deeply feel the desire of our residents and their loved ones to be connected in a more meaningful way.

Please know we continue to provide outdoor visits, window visits, and visits through technology and encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.

Sincerely,

Dee Smallman, Administrator



July 25, 2021

Dear Employees:

The safety and health of our residents and staff has guided our work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We feel the impact of social isolation on the health and wellbeing of our residents and are taking steps to implement a program that will allow some family members, friends or outside caregivers to provide care as permitted by statute and/or regulation and emotional support to residents.

The Essential Family Caregiver Program is to help reduce social isolation and has been created with guidance from the state. We want you to know that we have carefully assessed this decision to ensure we are taking all precautions and steps to ensure the safety and health of all who live and work here. We have implemented this program effective July 23, 2021 due to visitation restrictions.

Please know that we do not anticipate that the Essential Family Caregiver Program will provide benefit to our residents, particularly in the area of emotional support.

Essential Family Caregivers will be family members, friends or outside caregivers who provided care and support to residents prior to the pandemic or prior to admission. They will be designated based on the wishes of the resident and in consultation with the Administrator, Director of Nursing and Social Service Director.

Essential Family Caregivers will be held to the same infection control standards as you are – they will be screened upon entering the building, required to use appropriate personal protective equipment, practice hand hygiene, and ask to practice social distancing of at least 6 feet from residents and staff. They will limit their movement in the building, providing care and support either in the resident's room or in a designated pace in our building. We are also strongly encouraging that they be tested on the same frequency as you are.

We will track and monitor the number of Essential Family Caregivers in our building at any given time to ensure we are not putting other residents and staff at risk. We also have the right to restrict this program based on the status of COVID-19 in our setting and our broader geographic area.

With this guidance, it is important to know that Essential Family Caregivers cannot take a resident out into the community except for essential medical appointments and must not visit when a resident is symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19.

Please know we do retain the right to restrict or revoke Essential Care status if the designated person fails to follow our established policies and protocols, and ask for your support in letting us know if you see something that may present a risk to you, our residents and our facility.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Essential Caregivers, please contact the any management member.



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **Purpose:**

To provide residents, whose health or well-being may be impacted by the unintended consequences of prolonged physical separation and social isolation, visits from family members or other trusted individuals for the purpose of providing care, assistance with activities, companionship, emotional and social support to residents in long-term care settings as a result of reduced visitation policies enacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Definition of Essential Family Care Giver (EFC):**

An Essential Caregiver is an individual who is at least 18 years of age, who provided care and support to the resident on a routine basis, on average about twice a week, prior to the visitation limitations or restrictions. If the resident is newly admitted to Northern Lakes during a declared disaster emergency or public health emergency, a person who provided care to them before their admission would also be able to apply as an essential family caregiver.

### **Policy**

Northern Lakes will inform all residents, or resident representative (if resident has been deemed incapacitated or resides on Island Park Memory Care Unit), of our EFC Program and provide written information regarding the criteria for participation in the program, as well as Northern Lakes EFC application process.



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **Requirements to be an Essential Family Caregiver for a resident**

There are two primary requirements to be appointed as an essential family caregiver.

- 1) The caregiver must be at least 18 years of age.
- 2) They must have provided care and support to the resident on a routine basis, at least twice a week on average, prior to the visitation limitations or restrictions. If the resident is newly admitted to Northern Lakes during a declared emergency or public health emergency, a person who provided care to them before their admission would also be able to apply as an essential family caregiver.

### **Application Process**

- 1) All current residents or resident representative will be provided information in writing regarding the EFC Program when restrictions or limitations are placed on open visitations.
- 2) All new admissions will be provided in writing the EFC Program information sheet.
- 3) Resident or resident representative must notify the Administrator, Director of Nursing, or Social Service Director that they are requesting information about our specific process. At that time a meeting will be scheduled with the resident and/or resident representative to start the application process, this meeting will be scheduled by the next business day after request is made.
- 4) At the EFC application meeting the interdisciplinary team (administrator, director of nursing, social service director & other assigned members) will review rules and requirements that we have established for the EFC Program.



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **Essential Family Caregiver Expectations & Rules**

To be considered for an application as an essential family caregiver it is important to understand that you must:

- 1) Help provide care and support for the resident, similar to care and support provided prior to the visitation restrictions that may include:
  - Grooming
  - Eating assistance
  - Fall Prevention
  - Reduction of Anxiety Symptoms, or Depression
  - Other task as determined by resident, resident representative, or facility
- 2) If the resident or representative has designated more than one EFC, they must choose one to be the primary point of contact for communication and care coordination as it relates to the EFC program.
- 3) EFC must be able and willing to conduct screening prior to entry which includes Covid-19 rapid test at least twice weekly and screening questions including temperature prior to each visit.
- 4) They will follow all precautionary measures that will include:
  - Use of face mask
  - Hand Hygiene
- 5) They will agree to Northern Lakes visitation rules and abide by them.
- 6) They will agree to only enter the specific resident's room



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **Essential Family Caregiver Expectations & Rules**

- 1) All residents may receive Essential Caregiver visitation with approved application, except for those residents in a 14-day quarantine period, those positive for Covid-19, and have not yet met the criteria for the discontinuation of isolation precautions.
- 2) Northern Lake's interdisciplinary team members will consult with the resident or resident representative about the resident's wishes or best interests to determine whom to designate as the Primary Essential Family Caregiver.
- 3) Those interested in serving as an Essential Family Caregiver must complete the application. The administrator in collaboration with the Director of Nursing and Social Service Director will approve or deny the application to serve as an essential family caregiver within 7-days of application completion.
- 4) Both the resident (if able) & Essential Family Caregiver(s) must sign the Visit Rules, Visitor/EFC Acknowledgement, waiver & release, and EFC Agreement prior to beginning.
- 5) Resident or representatives may request to designate more than one EFC based on their past involvement and needs. In these situations, the administrator & other team members will work cooperatively with the resident & resident representative to work out a schedule to accommodate the EFCs. Northern Lakes prefers only two (2) EFCs be assigned but under certain situations discussed during application process we can consider up three (3) EFCs. It is understood that only 1 EFC can be present at scheduled time.
- 6) EFC's must be at least 18 years or older.
- 7) EFC's must notify the Administrator or Director of Nursing immediately upon notification that they have tested positive for Covid-19, that an immediately family member has tested positive, or that they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, or they have developed any symptoms of Covid-19.





**Administrative Policy & Procedure**

**Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

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## APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION INFORMATION	
<b>First &amp; Last Name</b>	
<b>I am 18 years or older</b>	( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Yes ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) NO If no is checked application process can end
<b>Address Street, City, State, Zip Code</b>	
<b>Primary Phone #</b>	
<b>Email (optional)</b>	
RESIDENT INFORMATION	
<b>Name of Resident</b>	
<b>Relation to Applicant</b>	
<b>List the care you provided prior to visitation restrictions</b>	( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Meal set-up/cueing/eating assistance ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Assist with personal hygiene or grooming ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Fall prevention ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Reduction of Anxiety and/or Depression ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Other -
<b>How many hours per week do you expect or want to provide care</b>	( <input type="checkbox"/> ) 1-2 hours per week ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) 2-4 hours per week ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) 4-8 hours per week ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) Other -

I attest that if this application is approved and I am designated as an essential family caregiver, I will adhere to the rules and requirements including:

**SCREENING**

- The essential caregiver will be screened for signs and symptoms of Covid-19 utilizing state approved screening forms for vaccinated or unvaccinated visitors.
- Rapid testing at point of entry is strongly encouraged. Testing will be required on the same schedule as employees testing.
- The facility will be responsible for verifying and tracking testing status of essential caregivers
- The essential caregiver must inform the facility if they develop Covid-19 symptoms within 14 days of the visit.
- If I test positive, I will not be permitted to serve as an essential family caregiver for a period of time, as determined by federal and/or state guidelines.

**Other guidance**

- I understand that if there is more than one caregiver, one will be appointed as the primary point of contact.
- I will follow precautionary measures including hand hygiene, use of face mask and any other protective measures as determined by the facility.
- I agree to facility visitation rules and agree to abide by them
- I agree to only enter the resident room and not visit with other residents or staff members.
- I understand the resident or resident representative must agree to being an essential family caregiver, which can be revoked by the resident or their representative at any time. I further understand that the administrator or designee may revoke the status of EFC if I do not adhere to the requirements of the EFC Program.

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***FOR OFFICE USE ONLY***

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Date application received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of determination: \_\_\_\_\_

Determination will be made within seven (7) calendar days of the receipt of the application

( ) Application **approved** by the administrator/designee

( ) Application **denied** by administrator/designee with written rationale provided to the applicant

Administrator/Designee Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator/Designee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **COVID-19 Essential Family Caregiver Acknowledgment, Waiver, & Release**

The novel coronavirus (Covid-19), declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (Who) on March 11, 2020, has infected millions of individuals both in the United States and across the globe. While much about Covid-19 is unknown, the WHO and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) believe that Covid-19 is primarily spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when an individual comes into close contact (within 6 feet or less) for a period of time with someone who has the virus. You also may be able to become infected by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then using that same hand to touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

The best way to protect yourself and others from Covid-19 is to get vaccinated you also need to avoid being exposed to the virus as much as possible, follow appropriate hand hygiene guidance, and wear a mask when in small spaces or crowded areas. To that end, our facility is requiring that all essential family caregivers complete the following acknowledgement, waiver and release in order to enter this facility.

- 1) I, \_\_\_\_\_, am over the age of eighteen (18) and am competent to execute this Waiver & Release.
  
- 2) By signing below, I represent that I am not currently experiencing (nor have I experienced in the last three days) any of the symptoms listed by the CDC for Covid-19, including:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

If I do develop symptoms, I will notify the facility immediately.



## **Administrative Policy & Procedure**

## **Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

### **COVID-19 Essential Family Caregiver Acknowledgment, Waiver, & Release**

- 3) By signing below, I represent that I have not been in close contact (within 6 feet), for a prolonged period of time (15 minutes or more) in the last 14 days, with a person diagnosed with or has tested positive for Covid-19 (including those with a Covid-19 test result pending), If anyone in my household or with whom I have close contact comes in contact with the virus within 14 days, I will notify the facility immediately.
- 4) I understand that our facility will never be able to completely eliminate the risk that Covid-19 may be present at its location and therefore, I understand that by entering the facility property, I may be exposing myself to and/or increasing the risk of contracting Covid-19 or I may transmit the virus to those I come in contact with if I am carrying the virus; however, I am voluntarily and knowingly assuming the risk of contracting Covid-19 and/or transmitting the virus to the person I am visiting, and these risks are arising out of my presence at the facility.
- 5) I understand that given the nature and manner in which Covid-19 is transmitted, as well as its presence in the community in which the facility is located, the facility must protect itself from liability for personal injuries and illnesses sustained or contracted, by any person entering this facility.
- 6) I acknowledge that I have received notice of the Rules for Visitation and/or the rules for Essential Family Caregivers during the Covid-19 Pandemic, as well as information on handwashing & PPE requirements.
- 7) It is my intention in signing this Waiver and Release to give up any and all claims against facility for any reason relating to exposure, infection and/or spread of Covid-19.
- 8) I have signed this Waiver and Release with the full and complete understanding that I do so knowingly and voluntarily.
- 9) By visiting the facility, I agree to abide by any and all infectious disease risk mitigation efforts of the facility, including wearing a mask, hand hygiene, not socializing with other residents or staff, and screening process at all times.
- 10) I further attest that I have received information on the transmission of Covid-19.



**Administrative Policy & Procedure**

**Covid-19 Essential Family Caregiver**

Established: April 1, 2021

Updated: 7/1/2021

**COVID-19 Essential Family Caregiver Acknowledgment, Waiver, & Release**

Essential Family Caregiver Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EFC Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Representative Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

# Essential Family Caregiver Individualized Resident Plan

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Resident Name: \_\_\_\_\_

EFC Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Check if primary EFC

**Care Duties – List the care/support that will be provided**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Resident/caregiver preferences related to their Essential Family Caregiver plan will be clearly reflected in resident plan of care.

**Anticipated Caregiver Visit Schedule**

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<b>Hours of Visit</b>							
<b>Duration of Visit</b>							

By signing below on (day/date) \_\_\_\_\_, you agree to the plan established and times, and agree to abide by this plan at all times.

Resident or Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Essential Caregiver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Representative/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# Essential Family Caregiver Resident Checklist

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Name of resident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of EFC Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Completed & signed EFC Application Form

- If approved, provide copy to EFC
- If denied, provide written denial to the applicant

( ) Complete & Approved EFC Resident Plan

- If multiple EFCs per resident, there must be one designated as primary
- There must be one EFC Resident Plan approved for each designated caregiver

( ) Signed attestation from EFC regarding individual facility visitation policies and restrictions

( ) Signed attestation from EFC regarding individual facility policies on Infection control and providing care.

( ) Copy of EFC individualized Resident Plan added to medical record and provided to designated caregiver(s) and resident/representative.

( ) Resident's existing care plan updated to reflect their EFC Plan and any preferences

( ) Primary care staff informed and educated on EFC role and responsibilities

Signature of staff completing this form & all its tasks

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_