

EMERGENCY ORDER REGARDING WELLNESS CHECKS, QUARANTINES AND ISOLATION FOR PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 60 LIVING IN LONG TERM CARE, SENIOR LIVING, OR NURSING HOME FACILITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak;

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Mayor Jon Mitchell declared a citywide state of emergency to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak;

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control has identified older adults, 60 years of age and older at high risk for severe illnesses related to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, New Bedford has a large population of residents 60 years of age or older who live in long-term care facilities, senior living facilities, nursing homes and apartment buildings;

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2020 Mayor Jon Mitchell and the New Bedford Board of Health issued an emergency order, **“Wellness Checks, Quarantines and Isolation for Persons Over the Age of 60 Living in Long Term Care, Senior Living, Or Nursing Home Facilities During The COVID-19 Pandemic;”**

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2020 Governor Baker issued a phased-in reopening plan for the State;

WHEREAS, During the months of June and July, New Bedford experienced its lowest volume of positive COVID19 cases all year;

WHEREAS, on August 24, 2020 Mayor Jon Mitchell and the New Bedford Board of Health issued an amendment lifting visitation restrictions in senior living facilities.;

WHEREAS, Between August 26, 2020 and December 4, 2020, the City of New Bedford has seen an dramatic increase in key indicators of COVID-19 transmission, including: 1) the 14 day average daily incident rate per/100,000 people (from **4.3 to 48.3 cases**); 2) the total number of positive tests within a 14 day period (**69 to 815 cases**); and 3) the overall percent positivity over a 14 day period (**2.03 to 7.65 percent**);

WHEREAS, New Bedford has seen a substantial increases in the number of positive cases among staff and residents living and working in New Bedford based Nursing Homes (NH) and Assisted Living Facilities(ALF), as well as-those COVID19 positive patients, in need of intensive care at our local hospitals and Community Health Center;

WHEREAS, isolation, quarantine and social distancing are public health measures used to stop or minimize the spread of disease;

WHEREAS, wellness checks provide early identification and intervention for potential health issues during the COVID-19 outbreak;

NOW THEREFORE, Mayor Jon Mitchell and the New Bedford Board of Health, in order to protect New Bedford's senior population, hereby ORDER that, effective at 11:59 P.M., December 13, 2020, all long-term care, senior living facilities (defined as residential facilities which have designated units for individuals over the age of 60), and nursing home facilities shall implement the following senior wellness measures:

1. The facility manager shall prohibit all visitation except for compassionate care concerning end-of-life situations.
2. The facility manager shall, at the New Bedford Health Department's request, assist in coordinating visiting nursing services.
3. The facility manager shall prohibit all group activities and communal dining.
4. The facility manager (or designee) shall take the temperatures of all staff members each day upon arrival and departure from work and shall send home any staff member who has a fever.
5. The facility managers shall ensure all staff perform hand hygiene with soap, water and/or alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) before and after all patient/resident contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and upon removal of personal protective equipment, including gloves.
6. The facility manager shall keep all bathrooms well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
7. The facility manager shall promptly notify the Health Department concerning residents with newly pronounced respiratory symptoms or suspected COVID-19.
8. The facility manager (or designee) shall conduct wellness checks of residents age 60 and over to ensure their health and well-being. Such wellness checks shall consist of a minimum of a phone call every three days. If a resident does not respond to a first phone call, the facility manager shall call the resident on the second day. If the resident does not respond, the facility manager shall call the resident on the third day. If there is still no response, the facility manager shall contact the New Bedford Health Department and the resident's emergency point of contact and let them know that the facility manager has been unable to confirm the resident's wellness. If a resident does not have a phone, the wellness checks shall consist of door knocks.
9. The facility manager at nursing homes and long-term care facilities shall ensure that all residents have their code status reassessed and clearly documented in their active chart by December 25, 2020. Hospital transfer information shall indicate the current code status and the contact information for their health care proxy.

Violation of any provision of this Order may result in a fine of \$500 per day for each violation.

This order supersedes the order of the Mayor and Board of Health issued on August 24, 2020 concerning visitation at senior living facilities, and shall remain in effect through the period of the Mayor's Emergency Order.



Mayor Jon Mitchell

Date

12/10/20



Dr. Patricia Andrade
Chair, Board of Health

Date

12/10/20