

**THCA****TENNESSEE HEALTH
CARE ASSOCIATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THCA statement on visitation in Tennessee long-term care facilities

Tennessee's long-term care facilities have done an incredible job under extremely difficult circumstances over the past year as residents have been unable to see loved ones because of COVID-related visitation restrictions. The Tennessee Department of Health has announced there will no longer be state-specific visitation guidance related to long-term care effective Feb. 28, 2021. However, Tennessee's skilled nursing facilities are still required to follow visitation guidance from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and state-licensed long-term care facilities – including assisted living, residential homes for the aged, and any nursing home not certified by CMS – have been encouraged by the state to reference the CMS guidance when developing their facility-specific visitation policies. Because the CMS guidelines are similar to the state's guidelines and CMS is unlikely to change its guidance anytime soon, the state's removal of state visitation restrictions will likely have little effect because the CMS guidelines remain in place. As case counts decline and vaccines become widely distributed and are proven effective, we hope the federal government will modify its guidance, as well. But even then, precautions must continue to be taken to keep COVID out of long-term care facilities and protect our state's most vulnerable population.

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