

Visitation and Quarantine: Advocacy Strategies and Tips



If you believe your loved one is being denied access to visitors and/or inappropriately quarantined, the first step is to use CMS and CDC guidance. Print out the guidance and highlight the pertinent sections pertaining to your loved one's situation. Then ask facility staff to explain the reason for their actions. If the reasons are not in line with the CMS and/or CDC guidance, share the guidance with them.

If the concern about visitation or quarantine continues, here are some additional steps to take:

- **File a grievance.** Every facility must have a grievance process and a grievance official who oversees the process. Once you file a complaint or concern, the facility must investigate the issue, report its findings, and give you a written response stating what action has been taken or will be taken as a result of the grievance.
- **Raise your concerns at the next care plan conference or request a special care plan conference.** The care plan meeting is an opportunity to share your concerns with staff, talk about what can be done, and develop a solution.
- **Contact your local long-term care Ombudsman program.** Ombudsman representatives advocate on behalf of residents. They may be able to help you resolve the situation. To find the ombudsman program that covers your loved one's facility, go to: https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help.
- **If your facility has a family council, work with the family council on the issues you are facing.** The family council is a group that works together to address facility-wide concerns. It is often easier to make an impact as a group rather than on your own. For more on family council advocacy, see our [fact sheet on family council advocacy during COVID-19](#).
- **File a complaint with the State Survey Agency.** This agency is responsible for regulating nursing homes and investigating nursing home complaints. You can find [contact information](#) for your state under Licensure and Certifications.

Hopefully, these actions will resolve the situation. If not, you can pursue the following strategies:

- **Contact your loved one's elected officials.** They need to know what is happening in nursing homes in their jurisdiction. Also, ask if they will look into your concern. You can find your [elected officials](#).
- **Reach out to the media.** You can connect directly by communicating with a particular reporter or by writing an editorial, an op-ed, or a letter to the editor for your local or state paper. You can also use social media. Consider tagging your nursing home, their corporate owners, and your legislators. Sometimes companies respond faster to issues raised on social media to avoid unwanted attention.

Above all, be persistent! Family members frequently report that they have done all of the above, yet nothing has changed. Unfortunately, once is not always enough. If you call or email an office and do not hear back, contact them again. As frustrating as it can be, persistence is usually the only way to advocate effectively. So keep at it!

For more information, visit theconsumervoice.org.