



# The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

July 2021

## Visitation/Group Activities



Vaccination rates are increasing among long-term care staff and COVID infections continue to fall. As of July 1, nearly 90 percent of residents and more than 68 percent of staff are vaccinated. Many facilities are now allowing largely unrestricted visits with no appointments required. However, some facilities continue to unnecessarily restrict residents' visitation rights, communal activities, and freedom of movement.

The latest Department of Health guidance on these issues came out on May 12<sup>th</sup>. It *allows* LTC facilities to schedule visits if needed. However, this guidance does not *require* that all visits be scheduled. The Department of Health has also made clear in its communication to facilities that they should err on the side of greater freedoms for residents and more liberal visitation. As of July 1, there are less than two dozen LTC facilities that are considered to be in outbreak status.

Limiting visitation to 30 minutes once per week (or even less frequently); not allowing in-room visitation where permitted; and/or not allowing activities, communal dining or freedom of movement when possible is not in line with the guidance and violates resident rights. If your facility is still strictly limiting visitation or other resident freedoms, please contact the LTCO at 877-582-6995 so we can advocate for you. You can also join with the FACE NJ group (summary below) to advocate with other residents and families on these issues.



## FACE (Family Advocate Care Experience) NJ



FACE NJ is a group of families who joined together via Facebook in July 2020 to advocate for residents to have safe visits from their family and friends during the COVID crisis. FACE NJ has been instrumental in pushing the State to relax visitation restrictions, through personal stories, powerful vigils and memorials, peaceful

protests, lobbying policymakers for more humane visitation rules, and webinars to educate group members. Moving forward, FACE NJ will continue to advocate for safe, in-room visitation during this and any future health emergency and for quality long-term care for their loved ones. The Ombudsman's office works closely with FACE NJ to provide guidance and respond to concerns expressed by FACE NJ members. If you or your family members want to join FACE NJ, you can search Facebook for the "FACE NJ" group, click to join, and answer a few simple questions. You can also email Ginger Vukas at [gvukasnj@gmail.com](mailto:gvukasnj@gmail.com).



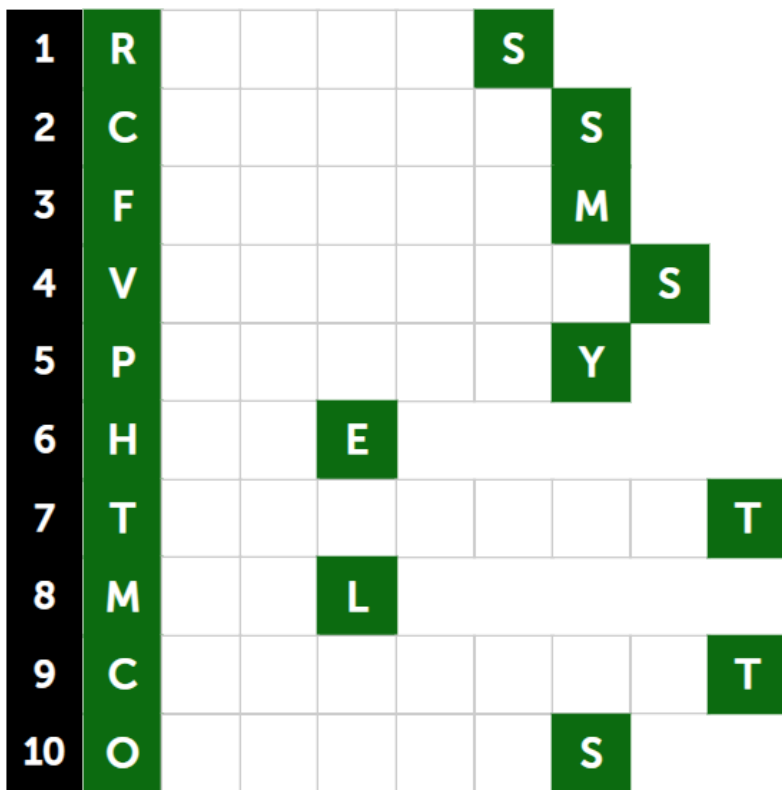
# Advocacy Alert! Support the Essential Caregivers Act (H.R. 3733)!



Federal legislators have introduced the Essential Caregivers Act (H.R. 3733), which would allow long-term care residents (or their representative) to designate up to two (2) essential caregivers who could continue to visit to provide care and support during any future health emergency. The legislation recognizes that the absence of family visitation and support has taken a devastating toll on long-term care residents during the COVID crisis and strikes a balance between resident rights and safety

precautions. The legislation would apply to skilled nursing facilities, nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, and inpatient rehabilitation facilities that receive Medicare and Medicaid funding. If you want to support this legislation, contact your congressional Representative and ask them to co-sponsor it. You can find your Representative here: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>.

## RESIDENT RIGHTS WORD SCRAMBLE PUZZLE



### SCRAMBLES

- 1 SRTGIH
- 2 COSCEIH
- 3 OEREDFM
- 4 VTRSOIIS
- 5 VIYPRAC
- 6 EMHO
- 7 MAETETTRN
- 8 ILAM
- 9 AIPOTMNCL
- 10 USTGONI

1. RIGHTS 2. CHOICES 3. FREEDOM 4. VISITORS 5. PRIVACY 6. HOME 7. TREATMENT 8. MAIL 9. COMPLAINT 10. OUTINGS

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman  
Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman  
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