

COVID-19: Hot Topics in Independent Living

How Are Members Managing Residents Who Leave and Return to Campus?

LPCs and Independent Living Providers are deciding how to monitor and permit IL residents to leave and return to the campus, and how to evaluate whether their off-campus activities pose a COVID-19 exposure risk to the rest of the LPC residents. LeadingAge offers the following “Hot Topic” for Managing IL Resident Campus Exit and Re-entry during COVID-19, drawing on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as well as best practices in the field.

Considerations for Resident Campus Exit and Re-Entry:

LPCs and Independent Living Providers are evaluating the following travel-related questions:

- **Has the resident returned from international/ out of state travel?** In many cases, members have asked residents returning from international or out of state travel to self-quarantine for 14 days, either at home on campus, or at an alternate location off-campus. This practice aligns well with the recommendations from CDC.
- **Has the resident returned from travel inside the state/ county?** Members now are facing, in some states, “stay at home” or “shelter in place” orders. In some cases, especially in those states, members have asked residents who leave campus for any local travel to self-quarantine at home.
 - **And what about personal errands? Alternative Services:** LPCs are encouraging residents to refrain from off-campus personal errands by enlisting staff to complete these errands, or by setting up an on-site convenience store with popular items. Alternately, members encourage residents to consider groceries and other sundries online.
- **Is the resident leaving campus for an essential medical appointment?** Members are taking one of two approaches to answer this question: either, they are allowing residents to leave and return without self-quarantine, or they are asking the resident to self-quarantine upon return. This depends heavily on the number of local COVID19 cases and states’ “stay at home” orders.
- **Is the resident engaging in daily exercise on foot?** Most LPCs and IL providers are allowing, and in many cases promoting, residents to go outdoors for walking and exercise. Members frequently remind residents about social distancing and other CDC-recommended preventative measures. On some campuses, there is a set time every day where residents go out on balconies or patios to greet each other from a distance.
- **What about new residents moving into the community?** Members are either temporarily suspending new moves in to the community, or are permitting new moves with the caveat that new residents must self-quarantine either in their former or new home for 14 days after move-in. See our “Hot Topics” page on this issue for more detail.

Screening and Monitoring: What are Members Doing?

- **Travel Screening Tool:** Many LPC and Independent Living members already have a leave of absence form that residents must fill out prior to leaving campus. Members are repurposing these forms, or creating new forms, to ask residents to self-disclose their off-campus travel prior to returning to the community.

- **What If Our Community Has a Gate House?** LPCs with campus gate houses will have the optimal control on IL resident travel on and off campus. Some members are:
 - Communicating clearly with residents about what requirements may be in place if they leave and attempt to return to campus.
 - Collecting off campus travel information both when the IL resident exits and attempts to re-enter the campus.
 - Providing the resident with a listing of resources that they can use to assist them in self-quarantining, whether on or off campus.

- **What If Our Community Has an Open Campus?** LPCs with open-access campuses face a greater challenge in managing IL resident travel on and off campus. Some members are:
 - Identifying which access point is the most frequented and most capable of being converted into a temporarily secured point.
 - Choosing which access points to close to traffic temporarily. It is important to notify local emergency responders and fire companies, as required by your local jurisdiction.
 - Establishing one controlled access point, and appointing staff to manage the access point.

- **What If Our Community Has Interconnected Levels of Care?** Some LPCs have buildings and various levels of care that are interconnected by hallways or walkways. At the secured entry points to the Assisted Living, Memory Care, or Nursing Home, LPCs are screening IL residents using the same tools required by CMS for all visitors and non-essential staff.

- **And What About Spouses Who Live in Different Levels of Care?** Members have taken one of two approaches to address the need to permit spouses to visit each other. Some members are permitting the spouse in under specific circumstances, such as end of life or caregiving dependency; others have established a “clean room” and “virtual visiting” tools per CMS guidelines to enable spouses and other family members to contact each other.

As the coronavirus pandemic and response continues to evolve, new and updated resources for all aging services providers will be posted to www.leadingage.org/COVID19. Please visit frequently to get the latest news and updates.