

STATE OF NEW YORK

614

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sen. MAY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to personal care visitors for residents of nursing homes and residential health care facilities

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public health law is amended by adding a new section
2 2801-h to read as follows:

3 § 2801-h. Personal care visitors for residents of nursing homes and
4 residential health care facilities. 1. As used in this section, the
5 term:

6 (a) "resident" means a person who is a resident of a nursing home or
7 residential health care facility;

8 (b) "personal care visitor" means a family member or legal guardian of
9 a resident designated by the resident or legal representative of the
10 resident to provide personal care for such resident;

11 (c) "personal care" means care and support provided by a family member
12 or legal guardian that is important to the mental, physical, or social
13 well-being for such resident;

14 (d) "nursing home" shall have the same meaning as set forth in subdi-
15 vision two of section twenty-eight hundred one of this article;

16 (e) "residential health care facility" shall have the same meaning as
17 set forth in subdivision three of section twenty-eight hundred one of
18 this article; and

19 (f) "legal representative" means a legal guardian or a legally
20 appointed substitute decision-maker who is authorized to act on behalf
21 of a resident.

22 2. The department is authorized and directed to develop rules, regu-
23 lations and guidelines authorizing and regulating the visitation of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 personal care visitors at nursing homes and residential health care
2 facilities. Such rules, regulations and guidelines shall:

3 (a) require nursing homes and residential health care facilities to
4 allow visitation by personal care visitors subject to the provisions of
5 this section;

6 (b) set forth procedures for the designation of personal care visitors
7 by residents and legal representatives including requiring a medical or
8 mental health professional to make a determination that such personal
9 care visitor is necessary. Such determination may be made by a medical
10 or mental health professional not affiliated with a nursing home or
11 residential health care facility;

12 (c) set forth procedures for changing a personal care visitor desig-
13 nation;

14 (d) require that personal care visitors waive liability against a
15 nursing home or residential health care facility for exposure to COVID-
16 19;

17 (e) provide that a resident may designate no more than one personal
18 care visitor;

19 (f) provide that personal care visitors shall be exempt from any
20 prohibitions on visitation at a nursing home or residential health care
21 facility, subject to the limitations and requirements set forth in this
22 subdivision;

23 (g) set forth the circumstances under which visitation by personal
24 care visitors at nursing homes and residential health care facilities
25 may be limited, suspended or terminated including, but not limited to,
26 local infection rates and health care capacity;

27 (h) require, at a minimum, that all personal care visitors follow
28 safety protocols required for nursing homes and residential health care
29 facilities' staff, including, but not limited to:

30 (i) testing for communicable diseases;

31 (ii) checking body temperature;

32 (iii) health screenings;

33 (iv) the appropriate use of personal protection equipment;

34 (v) social distancing; and

35 (vi) any other requirement the department deems appropriate;

36 (i) set forth frequency of visitation and duration of visits by
37 personal care visitors at nursing homes and residential health care
38 facilities; and

39 (j) set forth the total number of personal care visitors allowed to
40 visit a nursing home or residential health care facility at any one
41 time.

42 § 2. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 2801-i
43 to read as follows:

44 § 2801-i. Compassionate care visitation for residents of nursing homes
45 and residential health care facilities. 1. As used in this section, the
46 term:

47 (a) "resident" means a person who is a resident of a nursing home or
48 residential health care facility;

49 (b) "compassionate care visitor" means a family member or legal guard-
50 ian of a resident designated by the resident or legal representative of
51 the resident to provide compassionate care for such resident;

52 (c) "compassionate care" means short-term care and support provided by
53 a family member or legal guardian that is important to the mental, phys-
54 ical, or social well-being for such resident during critical situations
55 such as, but not limited to, at the end of such resident's life or in
56 the instance of significant mental or social decline of such resident;

1 (d) "nursing home" shall have the same meaning as set forth in subdivi-
2 vision two of section twenty-eight hundred one of this article;

3 (e) "residential health care facility" shall have the same meaning as
4 set forth in subdivision three of section twenty-eight hundred one of
5 this article; and

6 (f) "legal representative" means a legal guardian or a legally
7 appointed substitute decision-maker who is authorized to act on behalf
8 of a resident.

9 2. The department is authorized and directed to develop rules, regu-
10 lations, and guidelines authorizing and regulating the short-term visi-
11 tation of compassionate care visitors at nursing homes and residential
12 health care facilities during, but not limited to, the end of a resi-
13 dent's life, in the instance of significant mental or social decline of
14 such resident or when exigent circumstances exist regarding such resi-
15 dent. Such rules, regulations and guidelines shall require, at a mini-
16 mum, that all compassionate care visitors follow safety protocols
17 required for nursing homes and residential health care facilities'
18 staff, including, but not limited to:

19 (a) testing for communicable diseases;

20 (b) checking body temperature;

21 (c) health screenings;

22 (d) the appropriate use of personal protection equipment;

23 (e) social distancing; and

24 (f) any other requirement the department deems appropriate.

25 3. All compassionate care visitors shall be restricted to one room to
26 provide such compassionate care to a resident.

27 § 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after
28 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
29 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
30 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
31 completed on or before such date.