To All Licensed Assisted-Living Facilities (ALFs):

DHHS leadership has been considering the successes and limitations of our existing ALF visitation guidance. One success includes anecdotal reports of more staff and residents being vaccinated to meet thresholds. The biggest success has been high rates of vaccination among residents. That, along with declining community transmission, has led to fewer cases among both residents and staff. The primary limitation has been continued difficulty in providing access to visitation, based on CMS guidance. ALFs across the state have found the 90% vaccination threshold among staff prohibitively difficult to attain.

In light of declining cases of COVID-19 among residents at nursing facilities statewide, and to help further increase access to visitation at ALFs, **DHHS leadership would like to update the vaccination threshold recommended for ALF visitation among staff to 75%.**

Summary:
For ALFs with >75% staff AND >90% residents vaccinated, we can provide the option to allow increased indoor visitation for vaccinated individuals two weeks after the 75% of staff and 90% of residents received the 2nd dose of vaccine in the series. This option for increased visitation will be available even for ALFs in red counties. All other infection control measures must remain in place, including following the Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention, recommended limitations on the numbers of visitors, and visitation changes in the event of a facility outbreak.

Visitation should continue per standard guidance and all allowances per standard guidance should continue being made. “Standard guidance” refers to guidance memo QSO 20-39-NH from CMS.

Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention
- Screening of all who enter the facility
- Hand hygiene
- Face covering or mask
- Social distancing
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education
- Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces
- Appropriate staff use of PPE
- Effective cohorting of residents
- Resident and staff testing

This updated visitation guidance applies only to ALFs. Nursing homes that are certified by CMS must continue to follow CMS visitation guidance until CMS provides any new information.