



February 23, 2021

Governor Andrew Cuomo, Chair
Governor Asa Hutchinson, Vice Chair
National Governors Association
444 N. Capitol Street, N.W., Ste. 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Governors Cuomo and Hutchinson:

With the vast majority of senior living residents expected to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of March, they and those providing life enhancing services to them are counting on your leadership and significant influence as we navigate a successful and safe return to normalcy.

The American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) respectfully requests that you call on the states to review their respective visitation policies and update to allow family members and friends to visit their loved ones residing in senior living communities, including independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care or life plan communities.

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting extremely high vaccination uptake of senior living residents and vaccination clinics in these settings expected to be complete by the end of March or sooner, it is imperative that the strict visitor restrictions that have been in place since the outset of the COVID pandemic be lifted without delay.

Research has shown that prolonged social isolation, lack of engagement, and loneliness can contribute to functional and cognitive decline as well as depression and anxiety in older adults. Given that the risk of senior living residents contracting COVID will be largely eliminated in the next four to six weeks due to effective resident vaccination uptake, the strict visitation restrictions will be harming those you were previously seeking to protect.

Senior living communities help combat loneliness through the community it provides: opportunities for older adults to interact with others through communal dining and onsite programming to engage residents in socially and emotionally meaningful activities. Older adults need to be able to interact with family members and friends and we implore you take action to remove the harmful visitation restrictions in senior living communities now that most residents have been successfully vaccinated against COVID-19.

I would be pleased to discuss this request further and can be reached directly by phone at (202) 494-8682 or email at dschless@seniorshousing.org.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Schless".

David Schless
President

cc: State Governors