

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Oversight Working Group  
Socialization, Visitation and Caregiver Engagement Subcommittee

Meeting Summary

Monday, December 14, 2020 10:00 AM via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by Senator Cathy Osten, Subcommittee Co-Chair

- Opening Remarks
  - Subcommittee Co-Chairs Osten and Mairead Painter welcomed the presenters from long term care facilities, who were invited to brief the subcommittee on their respective facility visitation programs.
  
- Presentations by LTC Facilities on Visitation Programs
  - Presentations were given by Patricia Morse, President and CEO of Connecticut Baptist Homes and PierceCare, Linda C. Orłowski, Director of Social Work and Lana Knutson, Noble Horizons, and Sandra Arburr, Recreation Director, Athena Healthcare (see presentation on [subcommittee website](#)).
  
  - Senator Osten remarked that it appeared that facilities with predominantly Medicaid residents had the most problems. She asked the speakers what percentage of their residents were on Medicaid versus being private pay. Ms. Morse replied that approximately 85% of her residents are on Medicaid. Ms. Knutson responded that approximately 80% of Noble Horizons residents are on Medicaid. Ms. Arburr added that Athena's experience was the same as CT Baptist and Noble Horizons.
  
  - Ms. Painter commented on the availability of iPads 24 hours a day at CT Baptist. Additionally, she remarked that she considers making sure that all staff, not just recreation staff and social workers, are comfortable with the use of technology to be a best practice, as well as access and flexibility for residents and families. Ms. Painter spoke of the importance of "teaming" within a facility to provide as much access and flexibility to residents and families with their communication needs. Further, she discussed the communication challenges experienced by some residents, as well as the need for facilities to ensure that residents and families have a home-like setting for visitation.

- Debra O'Neill commended the facilities on the efforts and investment that have been made regarding communication tools. She spoke of the challenges faced in the facility where she works.
- Representative Hughes discussed the need to adapt technology and visitation to the cognitive changes experienced by some residents during the prolonged risk restrictions. She stated that it requires a tremendous amount of resources, especially staff, to liaison with families regarding timing of visits and support. In addition, Rep. Hughes revisited the issue of designating socialization and visitation as an essential need.
- Representative McCarty asked Ms. Arburrr if there is a timeframe associated with change of condition calls. She remarked that in some facilities, the calls don't occur until the following day. Ms. Arburrr responded that every effort is made to make sure that the change of condition calls do not go beyond that business day.
- Representative McCarty discussed the need to increase the use of and access to technology to support the communication between residents and family members.
- Other Business
  - Ms. Painter reminded members to submit policy recommendations for discussion at the December 21 subcommittee meeting.

Seeing no further business, Ms. Painter adjourned the meeting.