**HOLIDAY OUTINGS ADVICE – SAMPLE STAFF MESSAGE**

***Updated: November 19, 2020***

Dear [Staff Member]:

I wanted you to know that we are sending a message to residents and families today asking them not to plan outside visits during the holidays due to the surge in COVID-19 cases in Iowa. This is based on official guidance the federal Medicare and Medicaid agency (CMS) and guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We know just how special the holiday season can be and spending time with family is what adds meaning to our celebrations. However, we need your help to protect our residents, their families, and yourself during this risky time in the pandemic by limiting our contact with the broader community. As Governor Reynolds told us the other night, the COVID-19 surge is at a dangerous level in Iowa.

This may make some residents or families angry. And, I know that often you and your teammates are the ones who get caught in the middle; however, the risk of a possible COIVD-19 infection is just too high right now for the virus to be brought back into our building. Please know that you can give my contact information to any resident or family member who is upset. [Include appropriate contact information here.]

If people do choose to leave for a holiday gathering, the resident will need to quarantine for 14-days after returning. As you know, we’re most contagious during the two weeks right after being exposed.

We have received some good news on COVID-19 vaccines coming soon. The hope of a vaccine is promising, but until that time we all need to use extra caution to slow the spread of this highly contagious disease. In a [federal alert](https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-facility-holiday-recommendations.pdf), the head of CMS had a special message for us as staff. She said, “Staff should follow the same recommendations for residents and families regarding gathering with their families and friends outside of work to protect the vulnerable residents they care for.”

If you have questions or concerns about [Insert Organization Name]’s visitation practices, please let your supervisor know or feel free to connect with me [Include appropriate contact information here.]

I appreciate all that you have do to ensure a safe, clean environment for all who live and work here, and your tireless dedication to provide quality care and compassionate support to our residents.

Thank you for your commitment and care during this difficult time.

Sincerely,