

Preparing for Mother's Day: What are LeadingAge Members' Concerns?

APRIL 27, 2021

LeadingAge members are preparing to help residents, their families, and staff enjoy a safe and loving Mother's Day.

In an informal poll of LeadingAge members, most respondents said they plan to allow visitors on Mother's Day and are confident that their well-established infection control protocols—social distancing, masking, visitors barred from dining rooms, and limited numbers of visitors—combined with successful vaccination of residents and almost all staff, will keep residents, families, and staff safe to enjoy the holiday. They say residents and families look forward to visits, but caution is still a priority for most of them.

Courtney McGinness, VP of marketing & community engagement at [Episcopal SeniorLife Communities](#), Rochester, NY, spoke for many members when she says “We are not concerned about an unmanageable influx. Families remain cautious, thoughtful, and some a bit hesitant. Nonetheless, we have scheduled additional staff to be on hand to administer rapid testing as an extra precaution. [...] We have built a strong bond with residents and families over the past year, and they trust our process and judgment in

response to COVID-19. Throughout this pandemic, we communicated continuously to ensure their comfort in any decisions regarding COVID-19.”

McGinness also notes that her organization has placed less emphasis on single-day celebrations, instead spreading them out over several days before or just after the holidays.

Members are planning special meals, flower deliveries and gifts for all women (both residents and staff), and special activities. All of these members restrict dining rooms to residents only—and prohibit eating and drinking in common areas. Special Mother’s Day meals can be taken to resident rooms or enjoyed outdoors by families.

Kelly Lapadula, communications specialist for [St. Paul's Senior Services](#), San Diego, CA, says St. Paul’s Plaza Memory Care is creating “These Hands Have …” photo frames for each mother or female resident to display a photo of their hands along with a quote about their life and accomplishments. Examples: “These hands have raised three children; These hands have loved many furry friends. These hands have taught children of all ages how to read.”

[Kavod Senior Life](#), Denver, CO, like many other members, has set up an outdoor visitation booth that can be scheduled for visits with families both in independent and assisted living. Assisted living residents can have visits indoors and/or in their apartments (with safety precautions in place).

At [Mt. San Antonio Gardens](#), Pomona, CA, independent living residents can have guests in their homes or on patios, and a special brunch can be preordered and taken back to homes to share with guests. Residents in assisted living and skilled nursing settings will have a special meal and flowers and can have up to two visitors in rooms or on patios.

Skilled nursing residents will have a live guitar and piano concert on the patio where residents can meet with guests, without eating or drinking.

At [RiverSpring Living](#), Riverdale, NY, family visits are scheduled through the organization's website to limit the number of people visiting campus. Mother's Day visiting hours will be expanded to accommodate as many families as possible.

At [Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay](#), Virginia Beach, VA, families are now allowed to visit independent living and assisted living residents—without appointments or plexiglass screens—in residents' apartments or anywhere on campus. All visitors must still wear masks in common areas. More cautious visitors will be given the opportunity to do outdoor, socially distant visits at the community's seawall. Stricter rules still apply in the skilled nursing center. On Mother's Day, the dining services team will give gifts of baked goods and candy that families can purchase and have delivered to mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers.

At the [Beatitudes Campus](#), Phoenix, AZ, visitor numbers are still being limited, but on Mother's Day the organization will “extend the capacity,” and will also encourage Mother's Day celebrations for other days. The life enrichment team will provide gifts, videos, special activities, and cards to help celebrate.

The [Los Angeles Jewish Home](#) is one of the members not allowing visitation on Mother's Day. “We have planned ahead and already sent notes to our residents and their families that unfortunately due to the pandemic, and out of an abundance of caution, we will not be able to open our campuses to visitors this Mother's Day. We look forward to welcoming all back on campus soon,” says Peggy Hinz, director of communications. Hinz says the organization is celebrating “Mother's Day Month.” Gifts, a special meal, and socially distanced activities will be offered.

At [Jerome Home](#), New Britain, CT, staff is unsure whether visitors will be allowed on Mother's Day. "We have booked an entertainer for 2-3 p.m. to play within our outdoor 'included garden courtyard,'" says Jerome Home's Jenna Sweet. "We are looking at an ice sculpture to be located in the center of our huge dining room—we have 2 residents per table with plexiglass dividers." Sweet says the organization might reprise its popular car parade, featuring local police, fire trucks, and family vehicles. (See [the Facebook page](#) for video of the event.)

Residents of [St. James Place](#), Baton Rouge, LA, are headed for a field trip on Mother's Day. Director of Active Lifestyles Tonya Dixon says, "We are finally hitting the road after our buses have been parked for over a year, so we are taking our Mother's Day celebration off campus! We only have a short time here in south Louisiana before it gets too hot to take the residents out, so we are jumping on the opportunity and we've invited their families to meet us out for shopping and brunch."

At [Frasier](#), Boulder, CO, 100% of residents have been vaccinated (apart from a few who were not qualified to get the vaccine), and 94% of all staff and contractors have been as well. (Staff vaccination was not required or incentivized.) The mask mandate for residents has been lifted, though staff and visitors must continue to wear them. Dining areas will remain closed to outsiders, but visits in resident apartments and private rooms will be allowed. Colleen Ryan Mallon, VP of marketing and advancement, says, "We have been doing pod visits outside; we started by using Eversound and having residents inside and family members outside, but able to have conversations and see each other." Now, visitors and residents are using the organization's "LOV Pods," with great success. (See this [CBS Denver story from June 2020 about the pods](#).)

A [LeadingAge PA](#) poll of its members showed that Pennsylvania providers are confident in their ability to manage visitors and keep everyone safe during Mother's Day celebrations, though some communities may need to be closed to visitors pending

health department rules. Staff is working to ensure that families understand new visitation practices. Other findings:

- There are some housekeeping/laundry concerns due to the long period of no visitation.
- One provider may repeat a successful Christmas program that assembled families' pictures and videos into a movie to be aired on the in-house TV channel.
- Members are still offering virtual visits, but a lot of families are planning in-person visits; providers are planning to follow the usual masking/social distancing protocols.