



May 3, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

On late Saturday evening, we received notification that a second staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. Both staff members, who have tested positive, do not provide direct care to residents and now are isolated at home to recover. At this time, there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases among our residents and no residents show symptoms of COVID-19.

We notified the Chicago Health Department and the Illinois Department of Public Health about both incidences. While you may have questions about our staff members' well-being, please respect their privacy, as well as all that of other employees and residents by observing HIPAA's confidentiality guidelines.

This letter also serves as Mercy Circle's compliance with a new guideline recently published by the Illinois Department of Public Health requiring us to notify all residents, their families and personal contacts, and employees within 12 hours of learning about a positive COVID-19 diagnosis for a resident or a staff member.

During the last four weeks, six of our skilled care residents and four of our assisted living residents were tested for the virus. Nine residents' test results are negative; we are awaiting the test outcome for one resident in skilled nursing care. A total of nine staff members have been tested. Five staff members' test results were negative; two were positive, and we are awaiting the test outcome for two staff members.

To reassure you that Mercy Circle is following the guidelines of health agencies, I have listed precautions we have and continue to take during this global pandemic. Mercy Circle follows all procedures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Health.

Here are key protocols we follow:

Staff members are

- Screened, including temperature, twice during every shift
- Consistently assigned to specific areas in the community
- Are not allowed to work if they have symptoms related to COVID-19 and are directed to isolate at home until they are symptom-free and cleared by their physician to return to work
- Directed to practice hand-hygiene, universal masking and social distancing when it is possible to do so while providing care

Residents are

- Screened three times a day for any signs of COVID-19 if they live in our long-term care, memory care and assisted living wings
- Screened, including temperature, and self-monitoring daily for signs of COVID-19 when they reside in our independent living wing; if they detect symptoms, residents should contact their physician and then notify our Director of Nursing Anita Ajayi, RN at extension 3664 because she is responsible for tracking data for Mercy Circle
- Encouraged to practice hand-hygiene, universal masking and social distancing

With the extension of Illinois' executive order to "stay at home," we encourage residents only to leave the community for essential visits, such as physician appointments and errands for medications and groceries. As additional ways to protect residents and staff members all communal dining and gatherings for worship and activities remain suspended. Our housekeeping staff regularly disinfects high-touch and common areas throughout the day.

Mercy Circle maintains its strict no visitor policy. For exceptions such as end-of-life visits, we screen approved visitors for COVID-19 symptoms and give them a mask to wear.

At this time, Mercy Circle has an adequate inventory of PPE and medical supplies. We are grateful to our employees who make it possible for me to report our staffing also is sufficient.

**Our top priority is the health and well-being of our entire community.** We recognize the anxiety and concerns that you may experience. So, please know you can count on our team of dedicated, skilled and compassionate professionals as we do our best to meet your needs during this challenging time.

Thank you for your continued support during this time. We will continue to keep you informed. If you have any questions, please contact me at 773-253-3627.



Frances Lachowicz  
Executive Director