



May 15, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

We are blessed to be able to report there are no new cases of COVID-19 among our staff members and there has not been a single case of the virus among our residents.

Still, we remain vigilant about adhering to all the guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as well as the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health. As we anticipate progressing into a new phase of Restore Illinois, we are mindful of the power of COVID-19 and will continue to follow all precautions and best practices to mitigate its spread.

As one of many ways to support our commitment to the well-being of everyone at Mercy Circle, Moira McQuillan, M.D., our medical director, recommended certain staff members be tested for COVID-19. Test results are pending for 16 employees.

During the last six weeks, a total of 31 staff members have been tested. Three people, who were diagnosed with the virus, are recovering in isolation at home. Tests for 11 employees were negative. One person, whose first test was inconclusive, was retested as part of the group of 16 awaiting their results.

We always notify the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health about any occurrence of the virus and report any new incidence to you in compliance with IDPH communication guidelines. Please honor the privacy of a person receiving positive test results by following our example in observing HIPAA's confidentiality rules.

This letter also serves as Mercy Circle's compliance with a new guideline published by the Illinois Department of Public Health requiring us to notify all residents, their families and/or responsible parties, and employees of learning about a positive COVID-19 diagnosis for a resident or a staff member. We are pleased to learn from so many who receive our communication that you appreciate being notified with a voice message or text to access all communication, posted on our website, in a timely way.

Mercy Circle complies with recommended protocols and practices to abate the spread of the virus including the following:

Staff members who are

- Screened, including temperature, two times per shift
- Consistently assigned to specific areas in the community

- 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 to return to work
- Directed to practice hand-hygiene, universal masking and social distancing when it is possible to do so while providing care
- Directed to follow strict infection control measures while at work

Residents who 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-monitored 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
- Advised those in independent living only are to leave the community for essential visits, such as physician visits and errands for medications and groceries
- Encouraged to practice hand-hygiene, universal masking and social distancing

Mercy Circle also

- Maintains a strict no visitor policy with the exception of end-of-life visits for which approved visitors are screened and required to wear a mask
- Continues to suspend all gatherings and communal activities and dining
- Disinfects through each day high-touch common areas
- Has an adequate inventory of PPE and medical supplies
- Reports appropriate and sufficient staffing for all levels of living and care
- Continues to employ droplet and isolation precautions for residents in our skilled nursing care wing

We hope the way our staff members and residents collaborate to combat COVID-19 provides you with a sense of security and comfort regarding the threat of this virus.

If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact me at 773-253-3627.



Frances Lachowicz  
Executive Director