



June 12, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

I am very pleased to report the newest achievement of Mercy Circle's sustained infection prevention and control practices designed to abate COVID-19 in our community. *At this time, Mercy Circle has no new cases of COVID-19.*

During the last two weeks, we completed PCR swab tests for detection of COVID-19 for

- 57 residents in assisted living and skilled nursing care: all outcomes were negative
- 129 staff members: all test results were negative

With this good news, we continue to adhere to all CMS and IDPH guidelines as we devise a multifaceted plan to cautiously and gradually lift some restrictions and to conduct periodic testing to detect any change of status regarding COVID-19 among our residents and staff members.

During the next three weeks, Mercy Circle will finalize and announce plans to

- Reestablish visits by key healthcare providers
- Reopen the salon
- Organize and schedule activities for groups of 10 or fewer

Proceeding with these and other plans require every single person who lives and works here is virus-free.

If for some unforeseen reason we identify another case of COVID-19 in our community, we may be required to return to our current restrictions. We will notify the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health and you about any new positive diagnoses.

While staying faithful to all the guidelines of CDC, CMS, IDPH and CDPH, we continue the following practices as we aspire to revitalize daily life at Mercy Circle.

Staff members 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 symptom-free and cleared to return to work
- Required to wear personal protective equipment, including face shields where appropriate
- Directed to practice hand-hygiene, universal masking and social distancing when it is possible to do so while providing care

- Instructed to follow strict infection prevention and control measures while at work

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-monitored daily for signs of COVID-19 when they reside in our independent living apartments; if they detect symptoms, residents should contact their physician and then notify our Director of Nursing, Anita Ajayi, RN, at extension 3664
- Advised those in skilled care and assisted living are not to leave the community except for essential medical appointments and to coordinate such appointments with Anita Ajayi, RN, at extension 3664, for additional guidance
- Advised those in independent living to leave the community only for essential visits, such as physician appointments, 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 throughout 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

Because CMS and IDPH require us to maintain our no visitor policy at this time, we encourage residents and their families to schedule virtual visits. Please contact Mary Kate Moriarty, 773-253-3613, to coordinate the details for your visits. We understand it is difficult to be apart and appreciate your embracing new ways to be together.

Please be confident we are moving forward as quickly and as prudently possible to balance our quest for more freedom, with the safety and well-being of everyone in our community as our top priorities. Please call me at 773-253-3627 so we can discuss any topic important to you.



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director

PS More good news! Mercy Circle again can boast about its 5-star CMS rating.