



June 26, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

We share your extreme disappointment because Mercy Circle now must postpone scheduling outdoor visits with residents. In other parts of our country, we see how not respecting the power and threat of COVID-19 can cause a resurgence of the virus. So it remains our highest priority to adhere to numerous ways to protect members of our Mercy Circle family.

We also recognize how more than 100 days of isolation challenges residents and can impact their well-being. And we know how families and friends miss visiting with their loved ones who live at Mercy Circle. So we are especially grateful to you for your patience while we navigate uncharted waters roiled by this global pandemic.

***Mandated system for any reopening programs***

The guidelines published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, implemented by the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health, provide the direction we must follow. Every time we approach a new benchmark, we also consult with Moira McQuillan, MD, our medical director, to make sure we always put first the safety of all residents and employees.

Like other communities with a licensed healthcare wing, Mercy Circle now is required to test weekly all residents and staff in our assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care areas. As you already know, one staff member this week received a positive test result for the virus. We still await some results for employees who were tested this past week and will be tested again this coming week. Outcomes for all residents who were tested are negative.

All communities in Illinois like ours must continue this weekly testing process until we achieve 14 consecutive days when there are no positive outcomes for tests administered to designated residents and employees. So this coming week, we will conduct another round of testing for them. If there are no positive results, we can mark the first of two weeks without a new case of COVID-19.

***Let's plan for your reunions***

In anticipation of when residents can spend time visiting outdoors with their family and friends, I am detailing how our new approved system on our campus will work. Initially all scheduled outdoor visits will be 30 minutes to ensure more residents can spend time with their families.

All outdoor visits for assisted living and skilled nursing care residents will be scheduled from 9:30am until 11:30am and from 1:30pm to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Independent living residents will be together with families during the same periods of time on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For our exclusive use, the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest are graciously opening their beautiful Courtyard, a screened patio located south of our building. All visitors should enter our campus from 99<sup>th</sup> Street, follow the road to the east and look for signage directing them to the Courtyard as well as parking and a screening station.

During our first phase of outdoor visits, only one visitor per resident is allowed to ensure all residents can spend time with someone. This system soon will expand to two visitors per resident.

All visitors must

- Call to schedule their visiting time in advance and be screened for symptoms of the virus during a telephone call 24 hours before a visit
- Be screened a second time before entering the Courtyard for a visit
- Wear a face mask
- Use hand sanitizer provided
- Observe six-foot social distancing including staying at the visiting station, set more than six feet apart, assigned to them

While we must accept the delay of these first visits, please be confident we continue to look forward to reopening other sections, starting with the salon and dining rooms as soon as Mercy Circle meets all CDPH and IDPH conditions. We also are working to schedule appointments for healthcare professionals to see their patients here.

All the steps we take every single day to abate the spread of COVID-19 at Mercy Circle are listed on my previous communications with you and available on our website where this letter and my previous ones are posted.

We stay focused on our goal to balance our yearning for social connections with the safety and well-being of everyone in our community our priority. Please call me at 773-253-3627 so we can discuss any topic important to you.



Frances Lachowicz  
Executive Director