



July 17, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

Residents and staff members have no new cases of COVID-19 since I informed you earlier this week about two skilled nursing care residents and one staff member, whose tests administered on July 10 indicated positive results. Our two residents now are recovering in an isolated area and our employee is recuperating at home.

Protocols designed to protect all residents, employees

After receiving these test outcomes, we retested all skilled nursing care residents on Tuesday, July 14. All results were negative. We also placed the entire unit on droplet and contact precautions in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health.

All residents in this area will remain in their rooms until CDPH approves lifting this restriction after a period—typically 14 days starting with the date the tests with positive results were administered—and there are no new incidences of the virus.

Mercy Circle's COVID-19 protocols include weekly testing to detect the virus when a person does not have symptoms. In accordance with the health agencies' mandates, Mercy Circle uses the nasal swab procedure for weekly testing of all skilled nursing care, assisted living and memory care residents plus every employee. I confirmed we can expect results within two or three days from the laboratory processing our tests.

This proactive approach makes it possible for us to isolate residents and staff members as a way to contain the spread of the virus in our community. We think being as cautious as possible remains the best course of action.

Programs for skilled nursing care residents

While we are taking extra precautions for residents in our skilled nursing care area, we also have considered how to help overcome isolation by making days more interesting by

- Arranging and assisting with video and phone visits to stay connected with families; for assistance, ask Juanita Thomas
- Providing one-on-one social visits with Sister Mary Hauke, Meagan Roossien-O'Connor and Juanita Thomas
- Discussing your spiritual life with Sister Mary Hauke

- Distributing daily games, books, puzzles and more for leisure activities as well as iPads for playing online games and sending and receiving emails
- Delivering sweet summer treats including sundaes, shakes and root beer floats to residents' private suites
- Tuning into Channel 8 for daily Mass and engaging programs offered for all residents

Ways to enjoy daily life

While we have temporarily suspended outdoor visits with families, we continue to provide ways to independent and assisted living residents to socialize. Before going outdoors, please check the temperature and humidity to determine if you should do so. And stop at our Reception Desk to apply sunscreen and take a bottle of cold water with you. Always wear a face mask, observe six-foot social distancing, and wash your hands before and after being outside or visiting with each other.

We encourage you to

- Enjoy the beautiful enclosed Courtyard which the Sisters of Mercy opened exclusively for us
- Spend time in the shade sitting on the benches in front of our main entrance and on the patio
- Take a walk through our peaceful and green campus
- View daily Mass at 11am on our in-house TV Channel 8
- Participate in activities such as Jazzercise organized for groups of less than 10
- Play Bingo in the Illinois room and in the assisted living hallways
- Tune into Channel 8 for Zumba classes, for sing-alongs and for tours of world-renowned destinations listed on weekly calendars
- Raise a toast to residents celebrating their birthday this month as we deliver a special meal—including birthday cake, of course, and your choice of beverages from our wine and spirits menu
- Ask Mary Kate Moriarty to arrange a virtual visit using one of our tech tools by calling her at 773-253-3613

Assisted living residents, please call Janet Tucker at extension 3650 to inform her about medically necessary appointments. And skilled nursing care residents, please call Anita Ajayi, RN, at extension 3664 when you have a medical appointment.

New ways to socialize on the horizon

We have initiated planning ways so residents can safely enjoy meals together in our dining rooms, participate in more activities and schedule an appointment in our salon. We also asked Trinity Senior Communities for guidelines to resume offering Liturgy and Holy Communion in a safe and socially distant manner. While our faith has helped us endure this unprecedented time, I know worshipping together fortifies our faith.

While we have achieved protecting our residents from COVID-19, we strive to repeat that success for our staff members. So let's work together to liberate everyone from the virus. Please call me at 773-253-3627 to talk about any topic important to you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Lachowicz".

Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director