



July 24, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

As of this morning, we have no new cases of a resident or staff member who tested positive for COVID-19. Currently, we are waiting for test results for two residents who have symptoms associated with the virus. We cannot be sure of their status, however, until we are notified of their test results.

Last Friday, I informed you that two skilled nursing care residents and one staff member, whose tests were administered on July 10, had tested positive. One resident has recovered and returned to her private suite and the other still is recuperating. Our staff member also has recovered and returned to work in accordance with CDC guidelines.

***Your patience and participation, essential to protecting everyone***

With the number of COVID-19 cases spiking in several States and beginning to increase in Chicago and across Illinois, we underscore the importance of strictly adhering to the directives published by the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health.

- Always put on a face mask covering your nose and mouth before leaving your residence and wear your mask until you return
- Practice six-foot social distancing in all situations
- Wash your hands regularly and when leaving and returning to your home
- Avoid all non-essential outings and social gatherings

We also are enforcing Mayor Lori Lightfoot's travel orders for individuals who travel to and from States with high incidences of COVID-19. As of today, all of our residents, employees and healthcare providers who visit Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Utah are required to complete a 14-day quarantine when they return home.

Click here <<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/emergency-travel-order.html>> for detailed information for this list updated every Tuesday.

***The good news:*** The Illinois Department of Public Health is expected to issue new guidelines specifically for skilled nursing care residents about reopening communal dining, visitations and salon services in all areas.

As soon as we meet the criteria and can implement all procedures as designated, we will expand our offering of amenities. We recognize how important any step returning to a typical way of life is to everyone.

Mercy Circle's COVID-19 protocols include weekly testing to detect the virus, even when a person does not have symptoms, for all skilled nursing care, assisted living and memory care residents plus every employee. As soon as we receive results, we notify the individual and will inform them if there are any positive outcomes.

This rigorous testing schedule provides information we need to isolate residents and staff members, especially those who may be asymptomatic, to contain the spread of the virus in our community.

### ***Dedicated unit for COVID-19 recovery***

This past week, Sister Jane Schlosser, RSM, offered a blessing for the residents and staff when we used our COVID-19 Recovery Unit for the first time.

During the early days of the onset of the virus in Chicago and across Illinois, we established a separate area in Mercy Hall with support from the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest. When used, a team of employees work exclusively in this area.

### ***New system for planning phone and video visits***

As Mary Kate Moriarty prepares for her maternity leave, we have set-up a new e-address so others on the Life Enrichment team—Juanita Thomas, Katie McKirdie and Annie Reidmueller—can respond to your requests. To schedule a virtual visit, please send your request to [LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org](mailto:LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org).

In addition to the small group programs organized by our Life Enrichment team, Traci Parenti, our consultant for the team, is responsible for broadcasting activities to brighten your day, exercise for body and mind, and entertainment programs on our own Channel 8

### ***Special attention for our skilled nursing care residents***

Because it is necessary to take extra precautions for residents in our skilled nursing care area, we offer several ways to reduce their sense of isolation that has grown during the last four months.

Throughout the week, we encourage residents to

- Ask us to arrange and assist with video and phone visits to stay connected with families; for assistance, ask Juanita Thomas
- Request one-on-one social visits with Sister Mary Hauke, Meagan Roossien-O'Connor and Juanita Thomas
- Discuss their spiritual life with Sister Mary Hauke
- Plan time for games, books, puzzles and more for leisure activities as well as iPads for playing online games and sending and receiving emails
- Enjoy sweet summer treats including sundaes, shakes and root beer floats delivered to residents' private suites
- Tune into Channel 8 for daily Mass and engaging programs offered for all residents

### ***Enliven your daily life***

While outdoor visits with family remain temporarily suspended, we still provide ways for independent and assisted living residents to socialize. Before going outdoors, check the temperature and humidity and stop at our Reception Desk to apply sunscreen and take a bottle of cold water with you.

If you haven't done so, please try at least two of these options this coming week

- 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

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

***Satisfaction surveys***

This week, we initiated our annual resident and family satisfaction survey. If you received a survey, please complete and mail it no later than Monday, July 27.

Your comments and suggestions will be very helpful to us during this unprecedented time of a global pandemic.

We continue to strive to protect our residents and staff members from the threats of this global pandemic. 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,



Frances Lachowicz  
Executive Director

PS I am very proud to report Mercy Circle was nominated for the *Chicago Tribune's* "Top Workplaces" competition.

While it always is an honor to be recognized, it is very gratifying to see recognition of our dedicated team of professionals value how Mercy Circle helps them marry our mission and their service to our residents. And we appreciate your sustained expressions of support and encouragement when you send notes and cards to our staff.