



September 4, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members and Staff Members,

The Illinois Department of Public Health has confirmed Mercy Circle is now a CMS Phase Three community and Trinity Health has approved our plans to reopen more amenities and services for residents to enjoy.

This highest ranking is based on that fact that there are no new cases of COVID-19 for all members of our community. Here are the outcomes for tests conducted on August 31.

- 58 residents received negative results; the test result is pending for one person
- 101 of 109 staff members received negative results; results are pending for eight people

At this time, we will continue to administer weekly tests for all employees and for assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents in compliance with the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health.

### ***Barb Clarke reopens salons***

This week, we warmly welcomed Barb, our beautician since Mercy Circle opened seven years ago. Barb began working her magic for both independent and assisted living residents. And this coming week, she also will provide salon services for memory care and skilled nursing care residents.

Please be confident that Barb follows all COVID-19 precautions to protect you. Salons are reset to accommodate social distancing and disinfected after each use.

### ***Avis Clendenen holds Word and Communion services***

Avis has returned to our community as coordinator of liturgical and spiritual ministries. You will see her soon when she conducts gatherings where Communion will be offered for the first time since the onset of the pandemic in March.

Avis will hold two separate services for memory care and skilled nursing care residents where they live. She also will offer two separate services for independent and assisted living residents in the Agatha O'Brien Room.

### ***Communal dining on the menu soon***

Starting in mid-September, Mercy Circle reopens dining rooms arranged for social distancing and set for two residents per table.

Staff members will wear masks at all times and sanitize tables between each seating. Residents are required to wear masks until they are seated and when interacting with servers. They will be seated two people at a table.

- The dining room for independent living residents will offer a choice of 4 and 5:30pm times for dinner with no reservations required although seating is subject to availability
- The dining room for assisted living residents will serve three meals a day at two seating times each
- The Bistro continues to provide carry-out services for breakfast and lunch as well as meals available to enjoy at tables outside

Skilled nursing care and memory care residents continue to partake in all three meals in their dining rooms greatly modified to accommodate social distancing and to protect them with other virus-related mitigations.

### ***Outdoor visits, more activities enliven our community***

It is so good to see familiar faces of families and friends once again on our campus. Currently, we are scheduling

Outdoor visitations for all assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, for 1-hour periods between 1pm and 4pm, in the Courtyard the Sisters of Mercy have reserved for our exclusive use

- Visitors currently must
  - Be limited to two people 18-years and older from the same household
  - Respond to prescreening 24 hours before their visit
  - Agree to report any symptoms of COVID-19 that occur during three days after their visit
  - Provide their personal contact information to facilitate contact tracing which Mercy Circle will conduct if necessary
- Residents and their guests should schedule their visits by sending an email to [LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org](mailto:LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org)

While these IDPH guidelines do not apply to independent living residents, we encourage these residents to continue planning outdoor visitations following the same procedure and schedule.

- Activities for 10 or fewer residents have resumed in activities rooms set-up for social distancing on each floor including happy hour served by Mary Jo

- Classes including jazzercise with Cindy, exercise with Katie and Bingo are now offered in the Illinois Room
- Other programs and Mass from Monday through Saturday are broadcast on Channel 8

We encourage everyone to take walks through our beautiful grounds and sit on the benches at the main entrance or in the patio or Courtyard

### ***Sustaining our new status***

Please continue to observe all protocols as we follow the directives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health.

Some of Mercy Circle's precautions include

- Monitoring all residents who live in our healthcare settings for symptoms
- Screening all employees at the beginning of and during each shift
- Enforcing the City of Chicago's travel restrictions to "hot spots" that now require a 14-day quarantine upon return from certain States and Territories. The City posts this information every Tuesday and restrictions are effective on Fridays.
- Advocating that all residents only leave the campus for medically necessary appointments
  - Assisted living residents must call Janet Tucker at extension 3650
  - Skilled nursing care residents must call Anita Ajayi, RN, at extension 3664
- Encouraging families and friends to take advantage of compassionate visits with residents whose family member or dear friend has passed away or who is experiencing significant health challenges by contacting the staff members listed above
- Applying all prescreening practices for all healthcare professionals and other essential visitors who enter the building
- Restricting visitors, including volunteers and other non-essential healthcare professionals

As part of our effort to abate the spread of COVID-19, please remember to

- Put on a face mask covering your nose and mouth before leaving your residence and wearing that mask until you return home
- Practice six-foot social distancing in all situations
- Wash hands regularly using soap or sanitizer available at numerous stations
- Avoid all non-essential outings and social gatherings

We look forward to seeing more residents enjoying more of what Mercy Circle has to offer during the next two weeks. Please call me at 773-253-3627 to discuss your questions and suggestions.

This Labor Day weekend, please join me in extending a very special thank you for all of our staff members and continue to pray for them as well as all essential workers who are guiding us through an unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

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

**Frances Lachowicz**  
**Executive Director**