



October 22, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

Now that Mercy Circle is welcoming families and friends for indoor visits with residents, please be exceptionally attentive to following the basic precautions—wear a mask, observe six-foot social distancing and practice hand-hygiene often.

Why? Today's positivity rate of 21.5 percent in our immediate area, zip code 60655, exceeds by more than three-fold today's positivity rate of 6.4 percent for the City of Chicago.

For indoor visits in the Wisconsin Room, we ask all families and residents to schedule 48 hours in advance from 1 until 4pm on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Please read Mercy Circle's current guidelines about making reservations, and responding to our required 24-hour advance screening process when a staff member calls. Logistics also are posted on our website.

On beautiful days, we still encourage residents and their families to continue to visit outside in the heated Courtyard when it is comfortable for you to do so.

New communication channel

As all of us anticipate the possibility of changes in Mercy Circle's protocols and practices without much notice as we follow new directives in response to surges in the number of cases of COVID-19 in our surrounding area, we are establishing an email system in addition to posting information on our website.

If you would like to receive all weekly letters, 12-hour notices and other advisories emailed directly to you, please register at Communications@MercyCircle.org and write "Add my name" in the subject line of your request. We expect to have this new channel of communication in place no later than Thursday, November 12.

Testing updates

I am very pleased to report that all 57 assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents have received negative results for their tests taken on Monday, October 19. Forty-three independent living residents, who were tested on Tuesday, also received negative outcomes.

And we have received negative results for 59 of the 95 staff members who were tested this week. Test results still are being processed for 36 employees.

To meet the current requirements of the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health, Mercy Circle will test all residents in our healthcare settings on Monday, October 26, and all staff members on Monday and Tuesday. We soon will announce a mid-November date for required monthly testing for independent living residents.

Our assisted living resident, who had tested positive, has recovered and no longer is in isolation, and our independent living resident still is recuperating. Please respect their privacy and observe all HIPAA regulations.

Communal programs for each setting

According to the Chicago Department of Public Health guidelines, our skilled nursing care wing remains in CMS Phase Three, the highest ranking which makes it possible for residents to welcome guests for indoor visits and to enjoy our modified communal dining program and several small group activities.

Starting on Friday, October 23, and continuing until November 6, our assisted living wing will advance—if there are no new cases of the virus—to CMS Phase Two, which makes it possible for us to restore modified communal dining and offer more group programs.

Independent living residents again gather at suppertime in the Dining Room and can pick-up breakfast and lunch at the Bistro.

We sincerely appreciate how you continue to tap your resilience as we seem to navigate an ever-changing series of adjustments as we enter the cooler months with major increases in the general number of cases of the virus. So it is more important than ever that everyone who lives and works at Mercy Circle pledges to adhere to all precautions to protect each other as well as ourselves.

Please call me at 773-253-3627 to discuss your questions and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director