



October 30, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

As you know from news reports, the City of Chicago, which is designated as Region 11 in Governor JB Pritzker's Restore Illinois program, is experiencing record-breaking numbers of COVID-19 cases escalating day-over-day for the last seven days.

Today, the City of Chicago's positivity rate leapt to 8.1 percent, almost double its status at the beginning of October, and Illinois' positivity rate spiked to 8.5 percent, up from 8.2 percent on Thursday. Only one of the 11 Regions in Illinois has not been put on Tier 1 status.

While I am gratified to inform you there are no active cases of COVID-19 at Mercy Circle, we are not exempt from complying with all the restrictions that include suspending a wide variety of indoor gatherings and limiting the capacity of places where people are allowed to meet.

Testing updates

Earlier this week, we learned that all pending results for 36 employees tested during the week of October 19 had negative outcomes. Our processing lab also confirmed all 59 assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents, who were tested on Monday, October 26, received negative results. And of the 101 staff members, who were tested on Wednesday, October 27, 92 have received negative results and tests for seven are still in process.

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, November 2, and all staff members on Monday and Tuesday. We have scheduled Monday, November 16, for required monthly testing for independent living residents.

Precaution is key to protecting our Mercy Circle family

Effective immediately, due to the Tier 1 status, we are required to cancel all indoor visits and access to the salon for a minimum of 28 days. Our current modified dining program for all levels of living remains in place.

Residents also can still host outdoor visits. While we realize visiting comfortably in the Courtyard might be pleasant only on certain days, we urge residents and their families to seriously consider temporarily opting for virtual visits, which

definitely do not require bundling up for spending time outdoors. To plan a virtual visit, please send a request to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org.

We appreciate how our residents and staff members faithfully follow our proven basic precautions to combat the spread of COVID-19 including

- Putting on a face mask covering your nose and mouth before leaving your residence and wearing that mask until you return home
- Practicing six-foot social distancing in all situations
- Washing hands regularly with soap or sanitizer at numerous stations
- Avoiding all non-essential outings and social gatherings

At this time, Mercy Circle

- Strives to combat the effects of isolation for all residents
- Monitors all residents who live in our healthcare settings for symptoms
- Screens all employees at the beginning of and during each shift
- Enforces the City of Chicago's travel restrictions to "hot spots" that now require a 14-day quarantine upon return from certain States and Territories
- Advocates that all residents only leave the campus when medically necessary
 - Assisted living residents must call Janet Tucker at extension 3650
 - Skilled nursing care residents call Anita Ajayi, RN, at extension 3664
- Applies all prescreening practices for all healthcare professionals and other essential visitors who enter the building
- Restricts all indoor visits by residents' family and friends as well as volunteers and other non-essential healthcare professionals

New communication channel

To enroll in our new system to receive via email all weekly letters, 12-hour notices and other advisories, 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.

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