



November 13, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

Today, we learned two Dining Services staff members, who are asymptomatic and were tested on Tuesday, November 10, received positive results for the virus. One person worked here on Thursday, November 12, and the other most recently on November 1. Both are at home recovering.

Please consider these facts before making any decisions to expose yourself or others to the risk of transmitting the virus.

- On Thursday, November 12, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 15,415 new and probable cases of COVID-19, up from 12,702 cases the previous day. Once again, Thursday's total sets a new record high on a fourth day in a row. Plus the State's seven-day positivity rate rose to 13.2 percent on Thursday, an increase from 12.4 percent on Wednesday.
- Yesterday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot issued a 30-day stay-at-home advisory and imposed a 10-person limit on all family and social gatherings effective Monday, November 16. For the Thanksgiving holiday, she also urged Chicagoans to forgo all plans including anyone, even relatives, who do not live in the same household.
- Closer to home, here is the most current information from the Chicago Department of Public Health about our immediate area. As of the last day of October, our zip code had a very concerning 13.5 percent positivity rate, up from 7.9 percent seven days earlier. In nearby 60643, a 12.4 percent positivity rate increased from 7.4 percent on October 24.

We encourage all residents to remain on campus because the number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to surge to unprecedented levels in our surrounding area and across the State of Illinois. We also spotlight this week's news from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control about new findings: Wearing a face mask not only protects others but also safeguards the wearer.

Testing updates

As of Friday morning, November 13, we received negative results for all 57 assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents who were tested on Monday, November 9. In addition to positive results we received for two employees, we received 88 negative outcomes for 105 staff members tested this past Monday and

Tuesday. Another 15 results are pending. All results for the 43 independent living residents tested on Wednesday, November 11, also are pending.

Starting the week of November 16, Mercy Circle is required to test all employees twice a week because Cook County's positivity rate spiked to 13.4 percent on Wednesday, November 11. Mercy Circle again will conduct weekly tests for all residents in our healthcare setting on Monday, November 16.

Assisted living residents out of quarantine

Also on Thursday, both assisted living residents, who had tested positive last week, are recovered. So now we have reopened some programs and amenities for residents including

- Communal dining with appropriate precautions
- Group activities, now limited to 10 or fewer people who observe social distancing
- Prayer and Communion services in their area
- Scheduled outdoor visits
- More activities and programs on Channel 8

We also continue our best practices to mitigate the spread of the virus including monitoring three times daily this cohort of residents for symptoms of the virus.

Outdoor visits

At this time, all residents can schedule outdoor visits while weather permits. Please contact LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org to schedule a time—between 1 and 4pm on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays—to meet in the Courtyard which the Sisters of Mercy have kindly reserved for us. We have enclosed the porch to block the wind and added heaters.

If you do decide to plan a visit, please be very aware of the current risks associated with doing so. Instead, we hope you will consider the option of planning virtual visits with family and friends. Our staff is eager to help everyone stay connected when you send a request to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org.

Independent living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents

All these residents continue to enjoy

- Communal dining
- Small group activities, which are designed for safety and social distancing, and now limited to 10 or fewer people
- Prayer and Communion service

The Salon remains closed and there are no indoor visits for any residents.

All of us need to do our part

Thank you for following our precautions to abate the virus' spread that include

- Wearing a face mask that covers your nose and mouth
- Practicing six-foot social distancing in all situations
- Washing your hands regularly with soap or sanitizer at numerous stations
- Avoiding all non-essential outings and social gatherings

Please be confident that 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 most 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

Register to receive emails

This week, we have started emailing this letter to everyone who registered to receive our letters and notices directly. If you want to be added, please send your request to Communications@MercyCircle.org and write "Add my name" in the subject line.

I exhort you to be extra careful not only for yourself but also for each other. Please call me at 773-253-3627 with your questions and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director