



November 28, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

We were pleased residents decided to celebrate Thanksgiving Day here at Mercy Circle. And I am delighted to hear so many residents and staff members truly were touched by the greetings from their family and friends that were packed into a video album brimming with Thanksgiving wishes. This 40-minute video will air throughout this weekend on Channel 8. Please join me in thanking our Life Enrichment team for their post-production talent and time to compile all the videos people sent.

Test results

On Friday afternoon, one nurse who last worked in our assisted living wing on Thursday, November 19, tested positive for COVID-19 according to a test taken on Monday, November 23. This person, who is asymptomatic, is recuperating at home.

This past Monday and Tuesday, 102 staff members were tested for COVID-19. In addition to the first positive result received today, 79 have a negative outcome and 22 results still are pending. On Monday, November 23, we also conducted tests for 57 residents in our healthcare settings. All have tested negative for the virus.

On Thanksgiving Day and Friday, we completed the second set of tests for all employees and hope to have those results early next week. With so many tests being conducted nationwide, we appreciate your patience while it sometimes take a little longer to receive reports from our partner lab.

Until further notice

- All employees now are tested twice a week, once on Monday or Tuesday and again on Thursday or Friday
- All assisted living, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing care residents will continue to be tested on Mondays
- All independent living residents will be tested bi-weekly starting on Wednesday, December 2

Mercy Circle now can conduct rapid tests for COVID-19 for a resident or employee experiencing symptoms or exposed to someone with the virus. We appreciate your helpful cooperation with all our testing protocols.

Residents are asked to follow the advisory issued by Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Governor JB Pritzker to stay home and avoid social gatherings and nonessential outings. Any resident who leaves Mercy Circle, even for an essential appointment,

should contact our Director of Nursing Anita Ajayi, RN at 773-253-3664. She will advise you about the prudence of being quarantined—even if only away for an hour.

Vaccinations for COVID-19

With the possibility of vaccinations against the virus on the immediate horizon, please be confident Mercy Circle has registered for all staff members and residents to be priority candidates when it is available in our area. As soon as we have more information, which may take several weeks, we will share those details with you.

The spirit of Advent

As we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent, let us find ways to lift our spirits with our annual anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ. For this season, Mercy Circle will

- Broadcast Mass daily at 11am on Channel 8
- Share special Advent prayer services that air every Wednesday at 10am and 3pm on Channel 8 followed by Communion brought to residents who open their doors
- Reflect on the Advent season in the Chapel and Agatha O'Brien Room where the season is represented by color, lights and music

Enjoy our campus while staying-at-home

We are fortunate to have many ways for residents to safely leave their homes while observing social distancing and other precautions at a time when all Illinois citizens are asked to observe Tier 3 mitigation guidelines.

Please consider for yourself and encourage others to

- Join a walking group organized by the Life Enrichment team
- Walk outside by yourself or ask for an escort so you can stroll around our spacious grounds on days when weather permits
- Walk the spacious hallways along the Illinois and Wisconsin rooms which the Sisters of Mercy kindly let residents enjoy
- Watch television with a small group of others in the Illinois Room
- Gather in the Gallagher Room on the second floor for activities, as well as in the Library and Living Room near the Reception Desk and the smaller living rooms on each floor to visit with each other keeping socially distant and following the respective capacity limits
- Exercise in the Fitness Center, taking care of all cleaning requirements before you start and before leave
- Make time for individual meditation and prayer in our Chapel, the Agatha O'Brien Room and the Meditation Room on the third floor of the skilled nursing care unit

- Ask a Life Enrichment team member to help plan virtual visits for residents with family and friends by sending a request to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org
- Visit the Bistro for a breakfast or lunch meal, as well as snacks and drinks

Understanding the prevalence of the virus

On Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health today reported 7,574 new confirmed and probable cases recorded on Thursday, November 26. Even though this number of cases on Thursday is less than the 12,022 total cases reported on Wednesday, we must take into account the warnings of experts who anticipate another spike in positive cases during the next several days.

The Chicago Department of Public Health most recently reported one in 17 Chicagoans are infected with the virus. On Tuesday, November 24, the Chicago announced a slight decrease in its citywide seven-day rate of 12.4 percent. Still, there is no reason to lessen our efforts to protect everyone important to us from the virus.

The City's most recent report, published on Saturday, November 21, confirms the positivity rates most important to our community

- Our zip code, 60655, has experienced a downturn in its positivity rate to 18.6 percent—moving in the right direction from 24.2 percent seven days earlier—but significantly higher than the citywide positivity rate
- The positivity rate for neighbors in 60643 zip code also decreased to 7.9 percent, from 11. 25 percent the week prior

Tier 3 stay-at-home advisory remains in place

We continue to encourage all residents, including independent living residents who do not live in a licensed area of our community, to closely follow the practices we have instituted in response to Governor Pritzker's Tier 3 stay-at-home advisory.

For all residents, Mercy Circle

- Cancelled temporarily all outdoor and indoor visits
- Added more programs to Channel 8
- Closed the Salon
- Published an updated activities calendar to comply with Tier 3 guidelines
- Offers some small group activities now limited to six or fewer people, with social distancing and other precautions, organized by our Life Enrichment team
- Delivers all meals to residents' apartments or rooms
- Provides other programs and services that remain the same

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 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

Receive this letter in your inbox

We continue to add more people to our new email distribution database. Please send your request to Communications@MercyCircle.org and write "Add my name" in the subject line.

On behalf of your entire Mercy Circle team, please know how grateful we are to you for sharing your wisdom and grace with us during this Thanksgiving holiday.

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

Very truly yours,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director