



December 11, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

On behalf of everyone who works at Mercy Circle, I thank our residents and their families for their generosity to the Christmas Fund for Staff Members. You clearly spread joy with your gifts, and our employees are grateful for your appreciation for their care and service to you.

Since last Friday, we have some encouraging news to report

- All 58 assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents, who were tested on Monday, December 7, received negative outcomes
- All five staff members, who had tested positive on Monday, November 30, have recovered and returned to work in accordance with CDC guidelines
- The brief droplet and contact isolation precautions, which we started on Tuesday, ends today for skilled nursing care residents
- The resident, who tested positive after returning from a Thanksgiving visit with family and was subsequently hospitalized, has returned to Mercy Circle and now is recovering in our COVID-19 unit

So far this week, Mercy Circle received 93 negative results for the 102 staff members tested here on Monday and Tuesday, December 7 and 8; nine outcomes are pending. To fulfill our twice-weekly requirement for all employees, we again began administering tests on Thursday and will conduct the balance today.

For Mercy Circle's ongoing commitment to mitigate the spread of the virus with timely detection, we will continue our schedule for rigorous testing that includes

- All employees 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 tested on Monday
- All independent living residents, who are interested in being tested, can reserve their place for our bi-weekly schedule on Tuesday, December 15
- Residents and employees experiencing symptoms or exposed to someone with the virus should consult with Anita Ajayi, RN, Director of Nursing, regarding the need for a rapid test for COVID-19 available here

Reasons to stay the course

Wednesday, December 9, became the deadliest single day yet in the United States attributed to COVID-19, surpassing both cardiac disease and cancer as the leading causes, with 3,103 deaths reported. The same day, Illinois registered its third deadliest day.

Today, Governor JB Pritzker announced 9,420 new and probably cases tallied on Thursday, down from 11,146 reported for this past Wednesday. Even with this decrease, the 12.4 percent positivity rate for Illinois exceeds the benchmarks for reducing any Tier 3 restrictions. On Wednesday, Chicago's seven-day positivity rate of 12.9 percent is up almost one percentage point, compared with 12.0 percent the prior Wednesday.

Thank you for following our precautions to mitigate 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

While these practices seem so basic, experts confirm they can make all the difference.

Vaccination program for our community

So we are prepared to respond quickly with all required information when Mercy Circle is notified by CVS about our designated date here for administering inoculations against COVID-19, we need the wholehearted assistance of all residents and, in some instances, their families or POAs or personal contacts, as well as all of our staff members.

Even though we do not have a date certain about when CVS will be on-campus, please share our sense of urgency by completing two requirements no later than Thursday, December 17. If you need assistance, please ask.

- Call the Receptionist at extension 3600 to indicate you want to be vaccinated so we can place an order for the number of vaccines CVS will bring to Mercy Circle
- Make copies of insurance cards (front and back) and deliver them to the Receptionist

As soon as we receive the required consent form from CVS, we will distribute it with a request for everyone to quickly complete and return their information form.

Based on information provided by those who have registered and confirmed their interest by submitting all required documents, onsite clinic dates will be assigned to each person at Mercy Circle. Our goal is to ensure all residents and employees receive both.

CVS only will be at Mercy Circle one time for the first dosage and one time for the second dosage according to an approved schedule. All newly admitted residents and newly hired staff members will be vaccinated when CVS conducts a third visit.

People who miss their assigned time for any reason, however, only will have a second chance to receive the vaccine when it is available to the general public.

Tier 3 stay-at-home advisory remains in place

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

Residents should ask Paul May at 312-307-9043 and Marge Everett at extension 3606 for assistance with shopping for the basics. We also encourage and assist residents with online shopping and ordering curbside orders for them. And any resident who leaves Mercy Circle—for an essential appointment or for even just one hour—should call our Director of Nursing Anita Ajayi, RN, at 773-253-3664. She will advise you about the prudence of or need for being quarantined.

Mercy Circle provides approved, safe way to visit

While Tier 3 does not allow indoor or outdoor visits, it does permit window visits. So, we now offer 20-minute “window” visits between 1pm and 4pm on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. They are set-up at the west end of Mercy Hall so two family members can be inside the vestibule but separated by glass doors from residents. Please bring your cell phone for talking while safely seeing each other.

Send your request to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org. All visits must be scheduled 48 hours in advance. As part of the reservation process, an employee will review and confirm our prescreening protocol.

Gaudete Sunday marks reason to rejoice

With the availability of the vaccination against COVID-19 on the immediate horizon, we should encourage each other to remain steadfast in finding ways to celebrate the anticipation of Christmas.

In addition to our regular broadcast of daily Mass, please mark your calendar for celebrations of this season here on

- Sundays, December 13 and 20, when Communion will be brought to all residents
- Christmas Eve at 2pm, a special prayer service will be broadcast on Channel 8 plus Communion will be carried to all residents throughout our community
- Christmas Day a televised liturgy will be complemented by Communion brought to each area between 10:15am and 12noon
- Monday and Tuesday, December 21 and 22, to view Sandy Hanes Christmas special on Channel 8

We also hope you stop in the Chapel and Agatha O'Brien Room where the season is represented by color, lights and music. And, throughout our community, be on the lookout for elves delivering treats of holiday sweets and beverages.

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

In anticipation of again welcoming the Christ Child into our lives,



Frances Lachowicz, Executive Director