



TO Residents, Families and Staff Members
 FROM Frances Lachowicz *Frances Lachowicz*
 DATE December 21, 2020
 SUBJ Four Staff Members Today Tested Positive for COVID-19

Again today, we used our new Point of Care or rapid testing system to test 69 staff members for COVID-19. Sixty-five employees had negative outcomes for the virus.

Four, who are asymptomatic and were working here today, received positive results. They include

- Three members of our nursing team in the skilled nursing care unit
- One server who worked in the independent and assisted living dining rooms

Upon receiving their test results, all four employees immediately went home to quarantine while they recover from the virus. They only will return to Mercy Circle in accordance with CDC guidelines. Please respect their privacy by observing all HIPAA guidelines.

As you know, we began using this rapid testing system to expedite this testing process because our lab was taking so long to provide test results. When there is a positive outcome from a Point of Care test, we comply with the requirements of the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health to administer a PCR test to those individuals and send those swabs to our lab. We completed this process today and will let you know those results when we receive them.

We will complete testing for the remainder of employees on Tuesday, December 22, and repeat this protocol on Wednesday and Thursday to accommodate the Christmas holidays. On Wednesday, we also will conduct rapid tests for all assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents.

In Illinois, number of COVID-19 cases begins to decrease

Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 4,699 new and probable cases of COVID-19, significantly down from 6,003 reported on Sunday.

While the number of cases has decreased across Illinois, the number of deaths had surged to more than 1,000 each for the last two weeks. For 12 consecutive days, the State had reported more than 100 deaths per day until Sunday, December 20, when 79 reported deaths broke these record-breaking daily totals due to COVID-19.



On Sunday, the City of Chicago announced a positivity rate of 11.9 percent which had increased over the three previous days. Our Region 11 also reported increased hospital admissions during four of the last 10 days and that an average of only 21.4 percent of all ICU hospital beds were available.

Please exercise all precautions that protect yourself and others from COVID-19. They include

- Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth
- Observing six-foot social distancing
- Practicing hand hygiene
- Checking with our Director of Nursing about self-quarantining after visiting an area designated by the City of Chicago as a hot spot or leaving our campus

We truly appreciate how residents and staff members are finding ways to enliven the Christmas spirit here at Mercy Circle by taking advantage of the numerous programs and special holiday treats offered throughout our community.

Please call me at 773-253-3627 so we can discuss your concerns, questions and suggestions.