



January 8, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

Please join me in praising and thanking our leadership team—and everyone who assisted them—for their excellent preparation for our first clinic day when CVS administered the Moderna vaccine to 100 residents and 76 staff members.

I was proud to hear CVS' pharmacists and technicians, who were at Mercy Circle, say how our staff's professionalism contributed to a successful clinic. They also commented on feeling inspired by our residents' and employees' exceptionally high level of participation and their enthusiasm for being vaccinated.

As you know, there is a 28-day waiting period for the Moderna vaccine. Our new date for Mercy Circle's second clinic now is from 11am until 5pm on Saturday, January 30. Everyone inoculated on January 2 will receive her or his second and final dose of Moderna and others not available previously will receive their first dose. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine first designated for us has a 21-day timeline for the second dose.

Two residents test positive for the virus

On Thursday, we received reports of positive results for COVID-19 for two assisted living residents who were tested on Wednesday, January 6, as part of our weekly protocol. Following our regular reporting requirement, we notified the Chicago Department of Public Health and await direction to learn if residents in the assisted living wing must quarantine for a period of time. All other 55 assisted living and skilled nursing care residents tested negative on Wednesday.

Even though both residents are asymptomatic, they moved to our COVID-19 Recovery Unit to ensure they have all of the support they might need to speed their recuperation. Please honor their privacy by observing all HIPAA regulations.

As part of our bi-weekly testing for all staff members, 97 were tested on Monday and Tuesday, January 4 and 5, and all received negative outcomes. Yesterday and today, we are conducting the second round of tests for employees. So far, 93 employees have negative results but results are pending for others taken at the end of this week.

Mercy Circle offers safe way to visit in-person

Please take advantage of Mercy Circle's 20-minute "window" visits at the west end of Mercy Hall between 1pm and 4pm on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Two family members can sit inside the vestibule, separated by glass doors from where residents are seated. Bring your mobile phone to talk as you safely see each other.

Schedule visits 48 hours in advance by contacting LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org. An employee will review and confirm your visit with our prescreening protocol.

Mercy Circle provides support while Tier 3 stays 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.

Any resident who leaves Mercy Circle—for an essential appointment or for even just one hour—should call Director of Nursing Anita Ajayi, RN, at 773-253-3664. She will advise you about the prudence of or need for being quarantined.

Paul May at 312-307-9043 and Marge Everett at extension 3606 are happy to assist with shopping for the basics. They will order online and take care of curb-side pick-ups for residents.

During January we uplift our spirits with Happy Hours planned for assisted living and skilled nursing care residents on Tuesdays and for independent living residents on Thursdays. We continue to add programs that air on Channel 8 to bring a greater variety of topics and opportunities to engage for all residents.

We also nourish the soul with Word and Communion services including the distribution of Holy Communion for all residents. To honor the heritage of six IBVM Sisters, who live at Mercy Circle, Avis Clendenen has organized a panel presentation about the life of Mary Ward, who founded the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the 17th century. Stay tuned for a date when it will air on Channel 8.

Data prompts us to remain very cautious

We are very grateful we can begin to regain a sense of hope because members of our community are among the 207,100 people who have received their first dose of a vaccine.

Still there are reasons for concern. The Illinois Department of Public Health announced today 9,277 new and probable cases of COVID-19. The number of new cases has increased day-over-day since January 3 when IDPH reported 4,469 new cases.

Thursday also delivered four sobering facts to keep top-of-mind. Yesterday, Illinois became the fourth State in the Union to have more than one million citizens who contracted COVID-19. Also on Thursday, our country set a new record with January 7 as our deadliest day due to COVID-19. And, Chicago's seven-day positivity rate rose to 10.7 percent, up from 8.9 percent a week ago. Closer to home, the positivity rate in

our zip code, 60655, rose to 12 percent on January 2, up from 11.2 percent seven days earlier.

So, please protect yourself and others by

- 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

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

Very Truly Yours,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director