



January 15, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

We continue to follow our regularly scheduled testing protocols as well as conduct rapid tests for anyone who begins to experience what may be symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone with the virus. These practices are designed to help us monitor the well-being of everyone in Mercy Circle's community with early detection so we can take appropriate actions.

***One positive result for staff member, updates for others' recovery***

On this Thursday to fulfill Mercy Circle's requirement for bi-weekly testing, a full-time administrative staff member, who has been on a planned medical leave since Monday, January 4, received a positive result for COVID-19. This employee remains at home to recuperate from the virus.

Both residents, who have remained asymptomatic since they received positive test results on January 7, are ready to return to their assisted living apartments today in accordance with all guidelines of the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health. In case they needed extra support, they had moved to our COVID-19 Unit.

The CNA, who remains asymptomatic since receiving a positive test result on Monday, January 11, still is at home recovering from the virus. In an abundance of caution, a section of the skilled care unit where this staff member last worked remains quarantined until Monday, January 25.

Please respect the privacy of everyone who is coping with COVID-19 as well as any other health challenges by observing all HIPAA regulations.

***Status report for this week's regularly scheduled testing***

To comply with all mandates, we continue to conduct bi-weekly testing for all employees. On Monday and Tuesday, 113 staff members received rapid tests and all had negative outcomes. Yesterday and today, we are completing the second round of rapid tests for all staff members.

On Wednesday, we administered tests to 54 residents who live in our healthcare settings. We are awaiting those results from our lab.

***Second clinic day for Moderna vaccine***

CVS has promised to send us a revised consent form that must be completed by or for everyone who participates in our second clinic date which is slated from 11am until 5pm on Saturday, January 30. 

As soon as CVS provides the new form, we'll notify everyone who was inoculated on January 2 to complete and sign this document, which must be completed to receive the essential second dose. In addition, any resident or staff member, who was not vaccinated during our first clinic, can register to receive a first dose of Moderna on January 30.

### ***Mercy Circle extends time for in-person visits***

In response to requests, we have increased to 30 minutes Mercy Circle's "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.

Please contact [LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org](mailto:LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org) to schedule visits 48 hours in advance. A Mercy Circle staff member will confirm your visit and complete our prescreening protocol.

We also encourage residents, their families and friends to plan virtual visits using a variety of technologies available at Mercy Circle. For assistance in setting up a connection, send an email to [LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org](mailto:LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org).

### ***Mercy Circle adheres to Tier 3 restrictions***

While all of us are eager to reopen Mercy Circle and to travel beyond our campus, everyone still should follow the practices we have instituted here 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 curbside pickups for residents.

Our staff members continue to expand onsite programs and activities to provide more variety for residents. Please check residents' daily calendars for details.

### ***Hope for our near future, moderated by this week's realities***

Nationwide, this week has been the deadliest week due to COVID-19. While we are optimistic about how being vaccinated will mitigate the spread of the virus, we must be mindful that thousands more people continue to contract COVID-19.



Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced 6,642 new and probable cases of COVID-19, a very small decrease from 6,652 reported on Thursday. For our 60655 zip code, the City of Chicago reported a positivity rate of 14.4 percent on January 9, slightly down from 14.8 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
- Complying with Chicago's travel advisories, which currently shows the State of Hawaii is the only safe place to visit in our country's 50 States

I look forward to talking with anyone who has questions and suggestions. Please call me at 773-253-3627.

Very Truly Yours,



Frances Lachowicz  
Executive Director