



January 22, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

I am very pleased to report that all 56 assisted living and skilled nursing care residents received negative outcomes for the COVID-19 Point of Care rapid tests they took this week.

In addition, all 110 staff members had negative results for the first of two regularly scheduled weekly tests conducted this past Monday and Tuesday. Currently, we are completing the second series for employees and, as of this afternoon, no one has a positive result.

Until further notice, we will conduct tests for residents in our healthcare settings on Wednesdays and bi-weekly tests for staff members on Monday and Tuesday and on Thursday and Friday.

Recovery for one employee, quarantine to be lifted

The CNA, who tested positive on January 11, remained asymptomatic throughout the person's recovery, and has returned to work in accordance with CDC regulations.

On Monday, January 25, we plan to lift the quarantine for select skilled nursing care residents, whom we isolated in an abundance of caution due to their possible exposure to this CNA.

Second clinic confirmed for Saturday, January 30, 11am to 5pm

We are very grateful to the additional 11 staff members who signed-up to receive their first dose of Moderna during our second clinic. With this level of participation, Mercy Circle can boast that 98 percent of all residents and 60 percent of all staff members will be inoculated against COVID-19, which is well above a nationwide average of 40 percent for senior living communities employees.

There's still time for other staff members to take advantage of this free clinic where they can receive their first vaccination on January 30. Please contact the Receptionist at 773-253-3600 to register.

Please be mindful that the January 30 clinic is employees' last chance to be vaccinated during their workday with no long lines and at no charge. Specifics have not yet been announced about when and where vaccines will be available to the general public.



All registered residents and staff members will receive an advance notice about when to arrive on Saturday, January 30, in the Illinois Room. Everyone who attended the first clinic will be familiar with how we will prepare before the second clinic and how it will proceed on Saturday.

- This week, Mercy Circle will send a memo with an appointed time for each resident to complete and sign a consent form.
- Employees will complete their forms when they arrive at the Illinois Room on Saturday for the vaccination.

In the Illinois Room, CVS will

- Register each person
- Administer the vaccine
- Monitor all residents and staff members in an observation area for 15 minutes

Tier 3 restrictions lifted, daily number of cases vary significantly

Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced 7,042 new and probable cases of COVID-19, a considerable increase from 4,979 reported on Thursday. For our immediate area, 60655 zip code, the City of Chicago posted a positivity rate of 6.6 percent on January 16, a decrease from 8.5 percent seven days earlier.

Governor JB Pritzker announced today that he has lifted Tier 3 mitigation status for all 11 Regions. Currently, the City of Chicago is keeping in place its stay-at-home advisory asking citizens only to leave their homes for essential activities such as medical appointments not available via telehealth and shopping for basic needs.

In anticipation of the Governor's announcement, we are evaluating how to cautiously reopen areas of Mercy Circle so residents can spend time together in the dining rooms; attend Mass in the Chapel; and enjoy in-person small group activities. We want to be smart about this process and expect to initiate these changes two or three weeks after our third clinic which has not yet been confirmed.

Still, we must be mindful that COVID-19 remains a powerful threat to people of all ages in our nation. Since March 2020, more than 400,000 people have died due to COVID-19, with one-fourth of them perishing during the last five weeks. Experts forecast that the number of deaths will rise to 500,000 sometime in late February.

Keep your protection paramount

So while we may feel tempted to ease up on complying with the simple precautions that protect all of us, please realize we are still at risk. Continue to wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth; practice six-foot social distancing in all situations; wash your hands regularly; and conform with Chicago's travel advisories.



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.

Take advantage of what's available now

Please take advantage of our 30-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.

Please contact LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org to schedule visits 48 hours in advance. A Mercy Circle staff member will confirm your visit and complete our prescreening protocol. And if none of the times we have posted work with your family's schedule, please send a note to our Life Enrichment team so we can find a way to schedule a mutually convenient time to visit.

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.

Contact me at any time with your questions and suggestions. Call 773-253-3627.

In closing, thank you for embracing the opportunity to be vaccinated to combat the spread of COVID-19. Your thoughtful response highlights how much each of us value our community life. You serve as a wonderful example to many.

Gratefully,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director