



January 29, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

We were delighted to see so many independent living residents savoring every minute as they enjoyed their first meal together in the dining room last night since we closed the dining room in mid-November. And meeting Chefs Mark Ricketts and Aldo Rios, who very recently arrived here, precipitated a big thumbs up from all the diners. Both chefs bring their extensive experience working across the country and around the world in resorts, hotel fine dining rooms and restaurants.

As we continue to make plans to reopen places and programs at Mercy Circle, we look forward to sharing many more stories about residents taking advantage of what Mercy Circle has to offer for a fulfilling lifestyle.

Testing update

Yesterday and today, we conducted the second series of bi-weekly tests mandated for our employees. Of the 89 staff members tested so far, one received a positive outcome and 88 negative results.

This dining services team member, who is asymptomatic, immediately left Mercy Circle on Thursday, January 28, to recover at home. This server works part-time in the IL dining room, and only will return to work in full accordance with CDC regulations. Please respect this individual's privacy by following all HIPAA rules.

On Monday and Tuesday, January 25 and 26, we completed the first series of tests and confirmed negative results for all 105 staff members.

In addition, all 56 assisted living and skilled nursing care residents received negative test results for their tests on Wednesday, January 27. With this report, I also can confirm there are no active cases among residents and no residents have been asked to quarantine.

As you know, we test all employees and residents with the Point of Care rapid test system which makes it possible for us to identify any new cases within 15 minutes. Using this system further helps us quickly mitigate the spread of the virus.

Thanks to Cook County's decreasing positivity rates, Mercy Circle only will be required to test employees once a week starting on February 8. We also will continue to conduct weekly tests for all residents in our healthcare settings.

Once Mercy Circle achieves 28 consecutive days with no new cases of COVID-19 among residents and staff members, residents only will be tested monthly but employees will continue to be tested weekly until Cook Country's positivity rate remains steady below 5 percent.

Second clinic confirmed for this Saturday, January 30

All 100 residents as well as 75 staff members and third-party providers, who were vaccinated during our first clinic on January 2, will receive their second dose of Moderna tomorrow on Saturday, January 30.

In addition, two new residents, more than 20 more employees and a number of third-party providers including our podiatrist, nurse practitioner, lab technician beautician and priest have voluntarily registered to be inoculated during our second clinic. We regard these individuals as part of our Mercy Circle family and appreciate their commitment to ensuring the safety of everyone who lives and works here.

Each person, who signed a consent form to be vaccinated during our second clinic, has received a memo advising their time to arrive for their inoculation. We thought it would be helpful to have an overview of the schedule for our second clinic.

- From 11am until 5pm, residents and employees arrive in the Illinois Room at their appointed time where CVS team members will register them, administer the vaccine and monitor them in the observation areas for 15 minutes
- Starting at 11am, a CVS team member will inoculate skilled nursing and memory care residents in their suites

CVS will give each person a card confirming the date and dosage of the Moderna vaccine received. Please share this card with your primary care physician and keep the original with your other medical records.

Before leaving the Illinois Room, please stop at the photo booth to take a keepsake picture of an historic day and help yourself to a "band-aid cookie" as a special treat.

Tier 3 restrictions lifted, daily number of cases vary significantly

Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced 4,156 new and probable cases of COVID-19, indicating a plateau with 4,191 reported on Thursday and fewer cases earlier in the week due to day-of-the-week variances in testing.

In addition to a trending decrease in the number of new cases of COVID-19, positivity rates along with the availability of ICU beds are key metrics. According to all City, County and State reports, there is an adequate number of beds available.



Because there are some variances in positivity rates, I thought you would appreciate knowing the latest data regarding positivity rates for

- Our zip code 60655 that, as of January 23, decreased to 8.6 percent from 11.1 percent seven days earlier
- The City of Chicago that, as of January 28, decreased to 6.5 percent from 7.6 percent in one week
- Cook County that, as of today, posted a positivity rate of 7.2 percent
- State of Illinois whose rate today fell to 5.4 percent from 5.5 percent on Thursday

Protection remains key to safety

Governor JB Pritzker has lifted Tier 3 restrictions for our entire State; however, the City of Chicago asks people to follow its established stay-at-home advisory. And we are very optimistic about the long-term “positive” impact of so many members of our community being protected by the Moderna vaccine.

Still, we still must continue to wear a face mask that covers both nose and mouth; practice six-foot social distancing in all situations; wash 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—also 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.

Enjoy 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 by ordering online or picking up items for residents.



And because the IL dining room just opened, here's a reminder dinner will be served between 4:30pm and 6pm from Monday through Saturday. Please follow the signage identifying all the precautions we follow everywhere, plus the entrance and exit doors to facilitate social distancing.

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.

I am very proud of our community's thoughtful and generous response to participating in the clinics for the vaccine here on our campus. Thank you for embracing every opportunity to make it possible for us to enjoy more of what Mercy Circle was designed to offer and to protect each other.

Gratefully,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director