



February 19, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

Please join me in thanking our remarkable employees who found ways to shovel out of their homes and to trudge through 18 inches of snow to get to work on Tuesday.

And we truly need all-hands-on-deck for so many good reasons! All residents now enjoy dining together, participating in fitness classes, games and other activities, watching movies together, finding comfort in receiving Communion and joining in prayer services. Of course, both residents and staff members comply with all precautions that include wearing a mask and observing social distancing.

Mercy Circle advances to CMS Phase 2

Mercy Circle has met the criteria to move to CMS's Phase 2, which allows for us to reinstate more ways to partake of Mercy Circle's typical daily life. Residents should check their activities calendars for details.

Our newly restored in-person visits continue from 1pm until 4pm on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the Wisconsin Room for as many as 12 residents to welcome their guests. If a family member cannot visit during our regularly scheduled hours, please ask about making plans for another time. Based on recent schedules, we have extended the visiting time to as long as two hours and most likely can accommodate more than one visit a week for a resident.

Please send an email to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org to schedule a visit and review the *Visitor Guidelines* and *COVID-19 Precautions* posted on our website. Every visitor is required to comply with all guidelines and our screening process. For those who live far away or prefer to wait for better weather, please arrange virtual visits by sending a note to our email to schedule a virtual visit.

Our first Mass in the Chapel since last March was moved to 4pm on Saturday, February 20, because the snowstorm made it impossible for the priest to get to our campus on Tuesday.

Independent living residents are encouraged to attend and others to join this liturgy on Channel 1 or 7. All residents can receive Communion as Avis Clendenen visits throughout our community.



Starting next week, Mass will be offered in the Chapel at 11am on Tuesdays and 4pm on Saturdays with Communion brought to all residents where they live.

Contemporary Stations of the Cross on Fridays and Lenten Spiritual Journey on Wednesdays guide our reflections and prayers during this solemn season.

Mercy Circle complies with all precautions

Even with the majority of our community fully vaccinated, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services direct us to remain faithful to taking all precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Although you know them, I am listing them today as a helpful review.

- Monitor yourself for symptoms of the virus and request a rapid test if you experience any symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Wear a face mask that covers both your nose and mouth
- Practice six-foot social distancing in all situations, especially entering and exiting common areas now clearly marked to facilitate distancing
- Wash your hands regularly using soap and water or sanitizer
- Conform with Chicago's travel advisories
- Avoid unnecessary trips by asking Paul May, 312-307-9043, and Marge Everett, extension 3603, to assist with online ordering and picking up items from pharmacies, grocery stores and retailers
- Contact our Director of Nursing Anita Ajayi, RN, at 773-253-3664 for guidance on self-quarantining even if only leaving our campus for a brief time or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19

When new residents move into our community, they also will quarantine in their apartments for 14 days.

This week's tests results, other data

All results were negative for COVID-19 tests administered to 55 residents in our healthcare settings and 97 staff members.

At the direction of the Chicago Department of Public Health, we continue this testing protocol. But beginning in March, all residents in our healthcare settings will be tested monthly—instead of weekly—if there are no new cases of COVID-19 for residents and staff members. Employees still will be tested weekly.

While even one case of the virus is one too many, we ask you to now rely on media to learn the Illinois Department of Public Health reports as the number of new cases are trending downward. Our weekly letters now are focusing on safely reopening our community. 

It's such a joy to see residents and staff members spending time together, while staying mindful of practicing all our precautions to contain the power of COVID-19.

Please call me at 773-253-3627 when you have questions and suggestions.

Wishing you a blessed Lenten journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Lachowicz".

Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director