



TO Residents, Families and Staff Members
FROM Frances Lachowicz *Frances Lachowicz*
DATE March 2, 2021
SUBJ One Staff Member Tested Positive for COVID-19

On Monday afternoon, one server, who last worked in our dining rooms for independent and assisted living residents on Sunday, February 28, tested positive for COVID-19. This employee began to experience symptoms and came to our campus for a rapid test which was administered at a location here outside our building.

Our staff member immediately returned home to self-quarantine and recover, and only will return to work in accordance with CDC standards. Please honor all HIPAA regulations to protect this person's privacy as well as that of anyone who is coping with any kind of healthcare challenge.

We regret that this occurrence requires us to temporarily change some of our most recent plans for indoor visits reuniting residents and families and provided more ways for residents to enjoy each other's company. To ensure the safety of all residents and staff members, however, caution and compliance still direct every decision we make regarding the mitigation of COVID-19.

Scientists and medical experts tell us that such an incidence of the virus should not surprise us—even with Mercy Circle's exceptionally high level of participation in our onsite vaccination program by both residents and staff members. We also recognize the commitment and valor of employees who remain steadfast in their mission of serving residents throughout the last 11-plus months, today and in the future.

Temporary suspension of some gatherings

To meet CDC and CMS guidelines, we immediately suspended indoor visits for all residents. If there is not a single new case of the virus affecting a resident or staff member anytime this week and next, indoor visits will resume in 14 days. During this time, we encourage residents, families and friends to schedule vestibule and window visits as well as virtual visits by contacting LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org.

On a happier note, residents still can gather for regularly scheduled meals in their dining rooms, which are arranged for stipulated seating capacities, social distancing and other best practices. Independent living residents still can attend liturgies in our ►

Chapel at 11am on Tuesdays and 4pm on Saturdays. Channels 1 and 7 make them available to everyone in our entire community.

In addition to numerous virtual programs on Channels 3 and 8, we are allowed to offer some small group activities and one-on-one time with residents. The beauty shop also will be closed for two weeks.

Because Mercy Circle now has moved to Phase 1, assisted living residents will be tested weekly and employees continue with their weekly testing regime. As we know, a test only can confirm a moment in time for a person's status regarding the virus, but it is better to use this tool to regularly monitor for the presence of COVID-19.

Please follow all precautions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. They include wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth; observing six-foot social distancing; practicing hand-hygiene; checking with our Director of Nursing about self-quarantining after residents visit an area designated by the City of Chicago as a hot spot or leaving our campus for any reason; asking to be tested if you begin to experience symptoms associated with the virus or learn you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

We wholeheartedly seek to address how spending more time in their residences affects everyone who lives at Mercy Circle. Since the inception of this global pandemic, our staff members have instituted numerous ways to support the cognitive, psychological and emotional needs of residents. Like you, we experience first-hand how essential it is to foster the well-being of mind, body and spirit.

Your willingness to temporarily adjust your expectations about how to stay connected with each other can make a world of difference as we navigate the disheartened feelings all of us experience as we must once again—even for 14 days—change our daily lives.

Will you please call me at 773-253-3627 so we can discuss your concerns, questions and suggestions, or simply to share your disappointments about what it takes to do what is best for the common good?