



March 5, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

Mercy Circle remains in CMS Phase 1. We share your disappointment about shuttering so quickly—even temporarily—some of the engaging programs we had just reopened last week due to an occurrence of a new case of COVID-19 in our community.

While we are limiting a few in-person gatherings, we encourage residents to take advantage of ways to stay connected with each other during meals and select small group activities, as well as with family and friends during outdoor visits, vestibule, window and virtual visits. Our hope is to reopen in-person visits on Monday, March 15. For now, please schedule visits by sending an email to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org.

As I write today's message, I look to next Wednesday, March 10, the first anniversary of Mercy Circle closing its campus to protect residents and staff members. Together, we have navigated uncharted territory with grace, relying on the wisdom of experts who still confront the ever-changing challenges of numerous unknowns about COVID-19 dominating the world. Let us honor our cherished memories of those who succumbed and be grateful for those who have survived this powerful virus.

Tests results and go-forward plans

On Monday, March 1, when a staff member tested positive for COVID-19, we started counting days to determine when we move from CMS Phase 1—if there are no additional cases of the virus for 14 consecutive days. Then, we advance to CMS Phase 2, making it again possible to reopen more places and programs and visits at Mercy Circle.

This week, 96 other staff members tested negative for the virus. After an employee's positive case, we tested assisted living residents, and all 38 had negative outcomes. Because there have been no new cases for 28 consecutive days in our skilled nursing care wing, those residents are now tested monthly and their next date is scheduled for March 24.

We also thank everyone who participated in our final clinic for administering doses of Moderna last Saturday.

Currently available amenities and programs

Dining rooms remain open for all residents and some activities for small groups of residents are still gathering. Plus residents can tune into a variety of popular programs on Channels 3 and 8.

Independent living residents still gather for liturgies in Mercy Chapel at 11am on Tuesdays and 4pm on Saturdays. Others can participate via Channels 1 or 7.

On Wednesdays, residents are invited to attend the Spiritual Seekers presentation as part of their Lenten program in the Agatha O'Brien Room. On Fridays, Avis Clendenen helps us reflect on the meaning of Lent with a Contemporary Stations of the Cross. Once a week, all residents can receive Communion as Avis visits throughout our community; please check your calendars for the date and time for you and your neighbors.

News about our staff

By now, some of you may have met our new Executive Chef Diana Browder. She most recently led the culinary team at the Gukenheimer at The Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha. Please join me in welcoming Diana to Mercy Circle as we savor a fresh approach to our dining program thanks to her 10 years of fine dining experience.

Also Katie McKirdie has been promoted to the role of Life Enrichment coordinator to succeed Mary Kate Moriarty who is staying home a bit longer with her baby Martin and his sister Maggie.

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.

In addition to the basic precautions to mitigate the spread of the virus for anyone who lives, works or visits Mercy Circle, residents protect themselves and others by

- Avoiding unnecessary trips by asking Paul May, 312-307-9041, and Marge Everett, extension 3603, to assist with online ordering and picking up items from pharmacies, grocery stores and retailers
- Contacting 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

New residents quarantine in their apartments for 14 days after moving in.

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

Wishing you a blessed Lenten journey.

Sincerely,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director