



March 12, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

On Monday, March 15, Mercy Circle advances to CMS Phase 2, which allows residents to welcome guests for indoor visits. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during the last two weeks as we followed IDPH guidelines to ensure the safety of everyone who lives and works at Mercy Circle.

Indoor visits start week of March 15

One-hour, in-person visits are scheduled from 1pm until 4pm on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the Wisconsin Room for as many as 12 residents. If a family member cannot visit then, please ask about making plans for another time.

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 another way to visit, please arrange virtual visits by sending an email requesting assistance with planning them.

Ways to enjoy daily life expand

Also starting on Monday, all residents are encouraged to participate in a great variety of in-person group activities for 10 or fewer people. Residents' activities calendars are filled with details about these small group gatherings as well as televised programs on Channels 3 and 8. In addition, Lenten and Communion services as well as twice-weekly liturgies in our Chapel continue.

This coming week, Barb Clarke reopens our beauty shop for skilled nursing care residents on Mondays, for assisted living and memory care residents on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and for independent living residents on Saturdays.

Changes anticipated for some safety guidelines

Even though CMS has issued new recommendations for senior living communities with assisted living and skilled nursing care residents, Mercy Circle must wait for the Illinois Department of Public Health to update its policies and protocols.

For instance, we anticipate receiving direction allowing fully vaccinated residents and their loved ones to benefit from close contact with safety precautions. While we await these new guidelines, our leadership team is reviewing our community's current policies and practices.

Even when some practices are modified, everyone at Mercy Circle still will follow the basic precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 that include

- Monitoring yourself for symptoms of the virus and requesting a rapid test if you experience any symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Wearing a face mask that covers both your nose and mouth
- Practicing six-foot social distancing in all situations, especially entering and exiting common areas now clearly marked to facilitate distancing
- Washing your hands regularly using soap and water or sanitizer
- Conforming to Chicago's travel advisories
- Avoiding large crowds and 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

All test results are negative

This week, 37 assisted living residents and 99 staff members were tested. All received negative results.

To meet IDPH requirements, all employees still are tested weekly. Skilled nursing care residents are now tested monthly with their next date planned for March 24. Assisted living residents now move to monthly testing with close to or on April 14 scheduled for their next test.

This good news complements our community's celebration of Laetare Sunday on March 14 when that day's liturgy pauses from our focus on penitence to rejoice that Easter, a time overflowing with hope, is near.

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

Wishing you a blessed Lenten journey.

Sincerely,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director