



TO Residents, Families and Staff Members
FROM Frances Lachowicz 
DATE April 5, 2021
SUBJ Two Staff Members Tested Positive for COVID-19

As part of our regularly scheduled testing protocol for employees which began today, we discovered that two CNAs, who do not have symptoms and were working during the third shift in the assisted living wing, tested positive for COVID-19.

Both immediately left our campus to go home to self-quarantine and recover. Please honor all HIPAA regulations to protect their privacy. They only will return to work in accordance with CDC standards.

At Mercy Circle, we can find some comfort in the knowledge that so many residents and staff members are fully vaccinated because their participation in our clinics provides an important protection for everyone in our community.

Timely monitoring with rapid tests

Because we are using rapid tests this week, early notifications regarding the status of these staff members gives us the ability to respond quickly to ensure the best course of action to mitigate the spread of the virus. We will have test results for all residents in our community and for all employees no later than Wednesday, April 7.

We already are testing all independent living, assisted living, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing care residents. We also are prioritizing tests for staff members working in these areas. To comply with current guidelines from the Chicago and Illinois Departments of Public Health, we will test all employees. We also will monitor and retest residents in our healthcare settings and all employees every three to seven days.

Temporary changes for residents in healthcare settings

These incidences require Mercy Circle to immediately close dining rooms and salons, group activities, Mercy Chapel and plans for indoor and outdoor visitations.

If no other cases of COVID-19 are discovered this week, we will

- Temporarily close for 14 days, gathering places, visitations and events for everyone in assisted living until Monday, April 19
- Allow AL residents, who will not be quarantined, to leave their apartments—as long as they exercise caution by following all our safety protocols—to walk outside and visit one-on-one with their neighbors 
- Deliver all meals to residents in healthcare settings

- Air a variety of entertainment, exercise and activities programs on Channel 8
- Send the activities cart with games and puzzles to any resident calling Katie McKirdie at extension 3613
- Reopen these communal places and programs, including indoor and outdoor visits, for independent living, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing care residents

Please review the updated *Visitor Guidelines* and *COVID-19 Precautions* posted on our website. For now, we encourage families and friends of all residents to schedule vestibule, window and virtual visits by contacting LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org.

Best practices in place

While we wish we need not temporarily pause some of our recent returns to a more robust daily lifestyle, we appreciate your understanding that caution prevails to ensure the safety of everyone who lives and works at Mercy Circle. We know from recent news reports that incidences of the virus should not be a surprise because the positivity rates in Chicago and across Illinois approximately doubled last week.

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; 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.

Please call me at 773-253-3627 so we can discuss your concerns, questions and suggestions, or simply to share your disappointment about what it takes to adhere to the best practices to benefit everyone at Mercy Circle.

As soon as all test data are available, I will send you an update regarding any mandated changes in areas of our campus due to the presence of COVID-19 here.