



April 7, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

This letter provides new information regarding requirements recently mandated by the Illinois Department of Public Health because we identified two cases of COVID-19 in our community on Monday morning.

While I am sure most of us agree that caution and compliance has protected so many of us during the last 12-plus months, we are wearied by what seems like ever-changing regulations even as we reopen more places and programs for residents here.

Temporary changes for assisted living residents

After an extensive discussion with IDPH decision-makers, I regret to say all assisted living residents must observe 14 days of quarantine until Monday, April 19, if there are no new cases of the virus in this area of our building.

The agency's concern is based on recent data including its report of 3,790 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, the highest since January 29 when 4,156 were reported. Tuesday's positivity rate of 4.1 percent also is the highest since 4.3 percent on January 28. In addition, there is growing concern about the invasion of variant strains of the virus now in Illinois.

IDPH recognizes that almost every single resident is fully vaccinated, but still insists we exercise an abundance of caution. At Mercy Circle, we often talk about wisdom and grace. Now, more than ever we need to draw on those cherished portals to knowing how to accept what we cannot change.

While it's always difficult to lose—even temporarily—a sense of freedom so hard won, we will do our best to provide bright spots in the daily life of assisted living residents. All meals now are delivered to their apartments. Residents can participate in modified games and exercise programs from their residence's doorway. Channel 8 also provides a great variety of movies and documentaries, interesting activities such as exercise classes and a way to participate in daily Mass.

Please stay connected by contacting LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org to schedule virtual visits with families and friends.

Timely monitoring with rapid tests

This week's good news about test results is that everyone else—96 staff members, 22 residents in skilled nursing care, 39 in memory care and assisted living and 43 in independent living—received negative outcomes when we conducted rapid tests community-wide.

Return to daily life for most residents

With these findings confirmed, independent living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents can resume activities—communal dining, Mass in the Chapel, indoor and outdoor visits, and salon services.

As you know, Mass in Mercy Chapel is at 4pm on Saturday and 11am on Wednesday. Barb Clark reopened the salon in the skilled nursing care area today and will open the one for independent living residents on Thursday.

Please review the updated *Visitor Guidelines* and *COVID-19 Precautions* posted on our website.

Best practices in place

It is essential that all of us follow all precautions to protect ourselves 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 for the benefit of everyone at Mercy Circle.

Together, we will count the days until April 19,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director