



October 6, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Staff Members,

I am grateful to report that our community remains free of COVID-19. The fact that 100 percent of our residents and 90 percent of our employees are vaccinated demonstrates how we value living and working in a community. To comply with CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines, staff members, who are unvaccinated for medical or religious reasons, are tested every week.

Booster and flu shots

Because residents and employees received two doses of the Moderna vaccine during our January and February clinics here on campus, the protocol is for them to have a booster shot of the same vaccine. As you know from news reports, Moderna has applied for emergency authorization of its COVID booster shot to the FDA, which is expected to consider this application during the coming weeks.

Mercy Circle is poised to act quickly to provide the booster here when it is available. We will keep you informed.

Because our residents can welcome family and friends into their homes, we encourage everyone who is part of Mercy Circle's extended family to get vaccinated if they have not already done so or to schedule their booster shot when the appropriate vaccine is available for them.

In the meantime, Mercy Circle hosted flu clinics this week for residents and staff members. If a resident or employee has not been immunized, please call the receptionist to schedule a time.

Precautions still prevail

Even with our exceptionally high rate of vaccinations, we must follow the protocols set in place to protect everyone in our community. Remember that even vaccinated individuals can transmit the highly transmissible Delta variant now responsible for most new cases.

Because we currently are free of the virus here, it may be easy to forget taking precautions is still necessary. So here are highlights of Mercy Circle's guidelines for visitors which are posted on our website

- If a resident or employee begins to experience symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please stay in your apartment or do not come to work. Contact our Director of Nursing, Anita Ajayi, RN, at 773-253-3664 or AAjayi@MercyCircle.org for a rapid test

- If you are a family member or friend and are experiencing symptoms, stay home and get tested before visiting Mercy Circle
- Visitors and residents must wear a mask and observe six-foot social distancing when in common areas and hallways
- All staff members wear a mask and follow numerous other safety measures
- Visitors must complete a screening that includes a temperature check
- All visitors must proceed directly to a resident's apartment or room
- Everyone should continue to practice good hand-hygiene
- Everyone is expected to comply with the City of Chicago Travel Advisory
- When the weather is pleasant, everyone is encouraged to visit outdoors

If a visitor experiences symptoms of the virus within three days of a visit, contact me immediately at 773-253-3627 so we can conduct appropriate contact tracing.

Monitoring for symptoms

We encourage you to monitor yourself, and our nursing team monitors skilled nursing care residents. Here is a list of symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19. Because people who have been vaccinated can still contract the virus, symptoms may be more subtle. Please be alert to one or more of the following

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Blessings of Mercy Day

We celebrated Mercy Day on September 24, the date when Catherine McAuley opened the first "House of Mercy" in 1827 in Dublin. A beautiful prayer service was followed by a luncheon. Residents and staff members also received a delicious gift and a card illustrating a sculpture of Catherine McAuley by Linae Frei. The Morgan Murphy family donated this sculpture to the Sisters of Mercy, who moved it from outside Mercy Hospital's Clinic to our campus. A liturgy was celebrated in our Chapel on Sunday.

Please call me at 773-253-3627 if you have any questions.

Best wishes,



Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director