




TO Residents, Families and Staff Members  
FROM Frances Lachowicz   
DATE December 21, 2021  
SUBJ One Dining Server Has Tested Positive for COVID-19

A full-time server, who most recently worked in our assisted living dining room on Sunday, called yesterday to report a positive result for a COVID-19 test taken elsewhere.

Our fully vaccinated employee, who recognized symptoms associated with the virus, will stay home to recover during the next 10 days and only return to work at Mercy Circle in accordance with CDC regulations. Please follow HIPAA guidelines to honor our staff member's privacy as well as the privacy of others who are coping with a variety of health challenges.

***Extra precautions for our assisted living community***

Once a week during the next 14 days, we will test all assisted living residents and dining staff members and monitor residents for possible symptoms.

With the rapidly increasing number of cases with the Omicron variant, which is exceptionally transmissible, and the sustained surge in the number of new cases of both the Delta and Omicron variants, it is realistic to expect we may see more cases among our residents and staff members.

On Wednesday, December 22, Mercy Circle will conduct our weekly testing protocol for all assisted living, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing care residents as well as employees and third-party providers.

***Spike in new cases breaks records***

On Monday, December 20, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced 12,328 new and probable cases of COVID-19, the most in a single day since December 1, 2020.

Yesterday's report quickly exceeded last Thursday's announcement of 12,288 cases, then the highest number of cases reported in a single day. This is the first time since last November that our State has averaged more than 10,000 cases a day.



***What can we do to protect the most vulnerable in our community?***

All services continue including activities, the beauty shop and communal dining.

- Ask your friends and family members, who are not vaccinated, to stay home and not visit during the Christmas holidays. Even though this is very disappointing, it is the right decision.
- Limit all gatherings to small groups in which everyone is vaccinated.
- Direct all guests to our *Visitor Guidelines* on Mercy Circle's website before planning a visit in a resident's apartment or suite.
- Increase your adherence to safety practices to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
  - Wear a tight-fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth
  - Wash your hands frequently
  - Observe social distancing in all common areas
  - Contact the reception desk and stay in your apartment if you think you may have symptoms or been exposed to someone with the virus
  - Request a test if you notice symptoms associated with COVID-19
  - Limit your time away from Mercy Circle
  - Avoid crowds

I welcome your ideas about how to encourage people to embrace a low-risk lifestyle. Please call me at 773-253-3627 to discuss your suggestions and questions.