



TO Residents, Families and Staff Members
FROM Frances Lachowicz *Frances Lachowicz*
DATE January 5, 2022
SUBJ Six Staff Members Have Tested Positive for COVID-19

We completed today the regularly scheduled rapid tests for staff members and third-party providers. Here is a summary of our employees who received positive results.

- Two CNAs, who last worked here on Monday, January 3, have been home not feeling well so they came to campus for drive-up tests
 - One last cared for residents in skilled nursing care
 - One most recently helped assisted living residents
- Two activities staff members with different situations
 - One asymptomatic employee working in skilled nursing care just returned from vacation today and was tested as part of our protocol
 - One, who last worked on Monday, January 3, in our assisted living community, tested negative here yesterday but stayed home today and decided to be tested again elsewhere and received a positive result
- One newly hired dining server, who was tested as part of our first day of orientation, has had no contact with residents
- One manager, who began to feel symptoms today but has had no direct contact with residents this week, tested positive today after having a negative result on Tuesday

Our staff members only will return to work in accordance with CDC standards. We ask you to follow HIPAA guidelines to respect the privacy of these individuals newly diagnosed with COVID-19, as well as other residents and staff members, who are recovering from the virus.

While we are concerned about anyone who contracts COVID-19, we are grateful that employees and residents are experiencing only mild symptoms because they are vaccinated. If there is a silver lining, this is it! Plus, four residents and eight staff members already have recovered after testing positive in December 2021.

As part of our early detention plan designed to slow the spread of the virus, Mercy Circle continues its semi-weekly testing on this Friday and next Tuesday.



When someone receives a positive result for a rapid test, we also administer a PCR test and send it to our lab for confirmation. If you think you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please contact the receptionist to schedule a rapid test.

Today's news should guide your actions

The Illinois Department of Public Health today announced 32,279 new cases of COVID-19 that were reported on Tuesday—the highest count since New Year's Eve. With 11,413 more new cases than 20,866 on Tuesday, this 24-hour period demonstrates how quickly the highly transmissible Omicron and Delta variants can infect others.

Even though this fifth surge of COVID-19 is affecting most vaccinated individuals in less severe ways, it has caused many hospitals to cancel all elective procedures due to the influx of unvaccinated patients now suffering from COVID-19.

To protect yourself and each other, we urge you to

- Stay home even if you are feeling okay
- Isolate if you experience symptoms
- Get tested if you have symptoms
- Wear a mask
- Observe social distancing
- Wash your hands

Please postpone in-person visits and call 773-253-3600 or send a request to LifeEnrichment@MercyCircle.org to arrange virtual visits. If you still plan to visit, carefully read *Guidelines for Visitors* posted on our website.

We appreciate residents' willingness to

- Stay in the wing where you live and consider the risks before deciding to visit someone who lives in another area here
- Participate in activities where gatherings are set-up for smaller groups in rooms set for social distancing
- Accommodate any temporary adjustments in housekeeping and dining services

We are very grateful that your sense of community helps Mercy Circle mitigate a more aggressive spread of the virus. Please call me at 773-253-3627 to share your suggestions and to ask your questions.