



February 10, 2022

Dear Residents and Staff Members, Families and Friends,

Progress can be messy and confusing. We're seeing that now regarding changes about if, when and where wearing a mask is required.

Controversy created by some unfortunately overshadows our good news: The number of new cases of COVID-19 has plummeted in Illinois and most of the country. Hospitalizations caused by the virus are beginning to wane.

Yesterday, Governor JB Pritzker announced that in most places wearing a mask no longer will be required starting on Monday, February 28. *As a senior living community with healthcare programs, Mercy Circle is included in one of the three categories—required for hospitals, nursing homes and some schools—where mask-wearing remains the rule.*

As you know, Mercy Circle provides assisted living, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing care. All of these settings require licenses to protect residents and ensure quality healthcare and programs. Our healthcare and other programs are overseen and evaluated by the Illinois Department of Public Health, which applies CDC and CMS regulations to guidelines for us to follow faithfully.

New communication system for you

At Mercy Circle, our most recent case of COVID-19 was reported on January 18.

So our leadership team has decided the time is right to change our communication practice regarding COVID-19 that began with my first letter on March 11, 2020. Your response as individuals—and as a community—united to adhere to our initial guidelines and to navigate ever-changing directives during the last 23 months is a testament to how you value the common good.

Our pledge to timely, transparent communication has helped protect our Mercy Circle family. We are not changing that commitment, but we are adjusting how we communicate with you as circumstances have improved.

- If and when there is a new case of COVID-19 in our community, we only will send notices via email. If you would like to receive future notices, please send an email to Sandy Urbaniak at SUrbaniak@MercyCircle.org. Please type ADD ME TO YOUR E-LIST in the subject line. ▼

- We are updating our website to post only current *Visitor Guidelines* as well as a summary of our current remediation practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We expect all visitors to follow our best practices published in these guidelines.

While we may embrace the advice of St. Francis of Assisi, who encouraged his followers to “wear the world like a loose garment, which touches us in a few places and there lightly,” we also must—for now—wear a tight-fitting mask that covers our nose and mouth!

Please call me at 773-253-3627 to share your ideas about how we can continue to enjoy more of Mercy Circle’s lifestyle and to discuss your questions.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Lachowicz".

Frances Lachowicz
Executive Director