

January 21, 2022



To All Families and Residents

PLEASE READ THE **ENTIRE** NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID. THIS IS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS TOPIC.

Due to the Omicron variant's spread and new NYS guidance, we are resuming our weekly COVID updates in a new, revised format.

“WELCOME” TO OUR NEW FAMILY CONTACTS

We are required to notify all residents, families and staff of a facility whenever we have a positive COVID test result for any staff member or resident. Two points of contact are required.

To help us meet these requirements, we have utilized a broadcast tool (School Messenger) to send emails and automated phone calls to up to two email addresses and two phone numbers per resident or resident contact, which is usually the first Health Care Proxy. The system then broadcasts to all the contact phone numbers and emails in this database. We also use this system to send out this update letter to our resident family contacts.

You will also receive a broadcast when we have a staff member or resident test positive for COVID-19. This includes an email *and a phone call*. We understand these phone calls can come at inconvenient times and would like to offer you the option to opt out of the phone calls for one or both of the numbers on file *so long as we have an email address on file to receive the alert*. This opt out will only effect the notification databases used by School Messenger. All contact info will remain on file in our Electronic Health Record, PointClickCare.

If you wish to opt out of alerts for one or both phone numbers we have file, please email me at pm@goodshepherdcommunities.org with the specifics. Please note it will take time to make the changes to the databases, so dependent on volume, there may be a delay from the time you make the request and the time the database revisions are completed. Thank you in advance for your patience.

STATISTICS

as of 1/20/2022	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
Year To Date + residents			
SNF	1	0	6
ACF	0	1	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
Year To Date + Staff			
SNF	13	5	7
ACF	3	6	n\a
IL	n\a	5	n\a
Year To Date Deaths			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized)			
SNF	0	0	6
ACF	0	1	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
Staff Furloughed			
SNF	5	1	3
ACF	1	2	n\a
IL	n\a	2	n\a

NEWS: NYS NEW COVID GUIDANCE UPDATE

To address some questions we are providing clarification on info provided last week.

- **SNF Visitors Masking and Distancing:**
 - All visitors must wear a well-fitting non-surgical paper mask or a mask of higher quality (i.e., surgical mask, KN95, or N95) at all times during any visitation at the facility. If the visitor wishes, a cloth mask may be placed over the paper mask. The masks must cover both the nose and the mouth.
 - All visitors must physically distance from facility personnel and other patients/residents/visitors who are not directly associated with the specific resident(s) being visited by that individual.
- **SNF Visitor Testing**
 - All nursing homes “must verify that visitors have received a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result one day prior to visitation for antigen tests and two days prior to visitation for NAAT (e.g., PCR) tests.” This means, for example, that a test for a Sunday visit should

be conducted no earlier than Saturday if it's an antigen test or Friday if it's a PCR test. We can accept lab results or the results of a home test.

- *GSC will begin requiring the test results as of Monday 1/17/22. Results should be presented at screening.*
- GS will provide rapid tests for those unable to obtain them elsewhere. These tests can be obtained from the receptionist screening the visitor, but must be administered outside of the facility independent of any assistance from our staff. Unfortunately, our staff will not be able to provide direction or physical assistance with the testing, so visitors who are unsure of their ability to self-administer the test should make alternate arrangements. For visitors who visit for multiple days, including a visitor who comes every day, proof of negative testing is required as often as feasible, at a minimum every third day (meaning at a minimum testing is required on day 1, day 4, day 7, and so on).
- Exemptions:
 - Ombudsman representatives. Under certain circumstances, the resident and ombudsman should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting, and the visit should take place in the resident's room.
 - Compassionate care visitors who are visiting in anticipation of end of life or in the case of significant mental, physical, or social decline or crisis. Other compassionate care visits are not exempted- only those that are so urgent in nature that the requirement to provide test results would result in an unacceptable delay in visiting. The visitor must wear any additional PPE that the facility deems appropriate.
 - Emergency Medical Services personnel.
- **Protocol for SNF visitor testing:**
 - When visitors enter the building for screening they will be asked for their negative test results. Negative tests results could be: a test card (Antigen Rapid test), electronic results (shown from their phone or tablet), or a paper laboratory result (PCR.)
 - Receptionist/designee will confirm negative results on the visitor sign in log
 - If the visitor does not present negative test results they will be given an iHealth OTC COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test.
 - The visitor should then return to their car and complete the test
 - All tests cards should be discarded in a red biohazard bag located in the lobby.
 - In the event a visitor refuses testing they will not be permitted in the facility. The receptionist should contact the HC Nurse immediately. The visitor may provide their contact information and the Nursing Home Administrator will contact them on the next business day.
 - Note: If a visitor enters the facility after normal reception hours, the House Charge Nurse will be responsible to confirm negative test results and document on the visitor sign in log.
- Positive Results and Infection within Prior 90 Days:
 - If a visitor tests positive, they should be excluded until they meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria for discontinuing isolation for the general public (i.e., currently for five days) and present a negative test.

- If a visitor has had COVID-19 in the past 90 days, they must still be tested. If they test positive, they must be excluded.

COVERAGE OF AT HOME COVID-19 KITS

At this time, Original Medicare does not pay for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests. People with Original Medicare can pick up free at-home tests from community health centers and Medicare-certified health clinics.

Some Medicare Advantage Plans may cover and pay for at-home over-the-counter COVID-19 tests. If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan, check with the plan to see if it will cover and pay for these tests.

Where else can I get free tests?

- Starting Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022, all Americans will be able to order free at-home COVID-19 tests through the federal government website, [covidtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

Thank you

Patti Mackey

GSC COO