

September 1, 2022



To All Staff

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

Changes in the information below are highlighted in green.



### **PCR TESTING AND INSURANCE CARDS**

If you do a PCR COVID test through Good Shepherd, you should understand the following. Unlike the rapid tests we perform and review in-house, the PCR tests are sent to an outside lab for processing. It is important we have current insurance information on file for you so these tests can be billed to the insurance companies. For those employees covered by GS's insurance, we changed carriers 1/1/22 from UHC to CDPHP. You should have received new cards. If you are covered elsewhere, you may also have received new 2022 cards. Please bring your insurance information with you when you arrive for your PCR test.

PCR tests are conducted to confirm a rapid result if you are symptomatic.

### **CDC RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL BOOSTERS FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS**

Source- CDC Website: "Data continue to show the importance of vaccination and booster doses to protect individuals both from infection and severe outcomes of COVID-19. For adults and adolescents eligible for a first booster dose, these shots are safe and provide substantial benefit. During the recent Omicron surge, those who were boosted were 21-times less likely to die from COVID-19 compared to those who were unvaccinated, and 7-times less likely to be hospitalized. CDC continues to recommend that all eligible adults, adolescents, and children 5 and older be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines, which includes getting an initial booster when eligible.

Following FDA's regulatory action, the CDC is updating its recommendations to allow certain immunocompromised individuals and people over the age of 50 who received an initial booster dose at least 4 months ago to be eligible for another mRNA booster to increase their protection against severe disease from COVID-19. Separately and in addition, based on newly published data, adults who received a primary vaccine and booster dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months ago may now receive a second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

These updated recommendations acknowledge the increased risk of severe disease in certain populations including those who are elderly or over the age of 50 with multiple underlying conditions, along with the currently available data on vaccine and booster effectiveness.

## INITIAL VACCINES\BOOSTER CLINICS

**GSC still strongly urges all staff to receive the FIRST booster when they are eligible to protect themselves, our residents, our staff and the greater community, and those who are eligible can also receive their SECOND booster on site.**

**Interested staff should complete and return a consent form today. And please remember to bring your vaccinations cards to the clinic.**

### **GS Village Endwell: 9/12/22 3:30pm**

**The Medicine Shoppe will be here 9/12/22 3:30PM** in the Great Room. Please sign-up on the sheet outside of the HR Wellness RN's office or send an email to [bburnside@gsvillage.org](mailto:bburnside@gsvillage.org) and include which manufacturer type you wish to receive. Consents are hanging in a folder under the sign-up sheet. Please complete the consent and scan and send to Britnee or provide the hard copy to her, and if you have insurance please make sure you include the insurance information on the form.

### **GS Fairview Home: 9/12/22 2:00pm**

**The Medicine Shoppe will be here 9/12/22 @2:00pm.** The consent forms are available outside the HR RN's office. Please complete and return it to Britnee Burnside or Jennifer Davidson. If you have insurance please make sure you include the insurance information on the form.

### **GS Chase: 9/12/22 9:30am**

Vaccinations are also available at many local pharmacies; CVS, Walgreens, etc., by appointment. **And The Medicine Shoppe offers vaccines on most Fridays at its retail location at 1179 Vestal Ave Suite 1, Binghamton, NY 13903.** If you are interested in this option, please contact your HR Wellness RN to coordinate your visit. Once you have received your booster, please provide your HR RN Wellness Nurse (DON @ Chase) with your updated COVID vaccination ID card.

Any questions please contact the HR RN Wellness Nurse, DON at Chase, Human Resources or your Supervisor.

## GSC STATISTICS

as of 8/31/22	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
<b>Year To Date + residents</b>			
SNF	23	9	0
ACF	18	6	n\`a
IL	1	43	n\`a
<b>Year To Date + Staff</b>			
SNF	64	28	34
ACF	22	22	n\`a
IL	n\`a	18	n\`a
<b>Year To Date Deaths</b>			
SNF	1	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\`a
IL	0	0	n\`a
<b>Residents Cases (in- house or hospitaliz</b>			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	1	0	n\`a
IL	0	0	n\`a
<b>Staff Furlough ed</b>			
SNF	3	0	0
ACF	0	1	n\`a
IL	n\`a	0	n\`a

### COMMUNITY LEVELS FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES

#### Broome County, New York

[State Health Department](#) 

**COVID-19 Community Level**

 Medium

#### Chenango County, New York

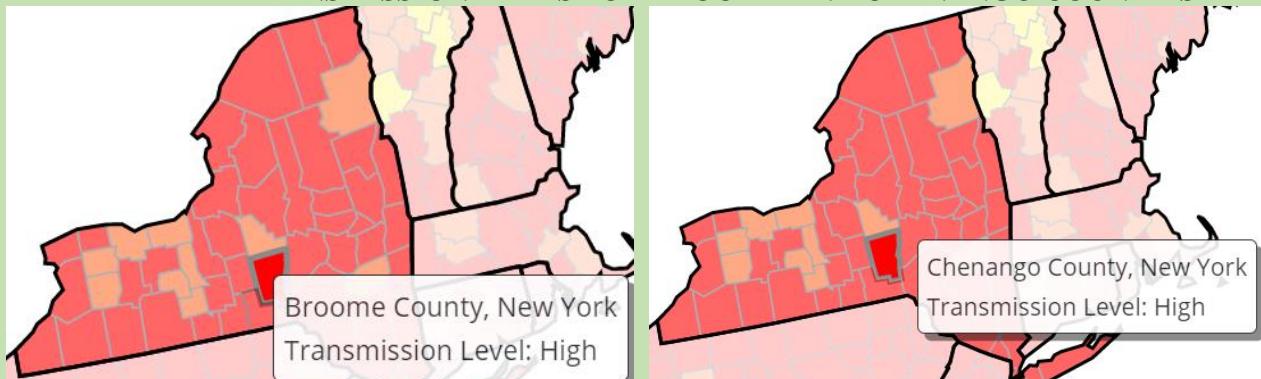
[State Health Department](#) 

**COVID-19 Community Level**

 Low

Masking recommendations are based on three factors — Covid hospitalizations, hospital capacity and new Covid cases — focusing more on preventing hospitals from getting overwhelmed and less on positive tests, which spiked during the omicron wave in December and January.

### TRANSMISSION RATES FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES



**CMS GUIDANCE ON EMPLOYEE TESTING: STAFF NOT FULLY UP TO DATE INCLUDING UN-BOOSTED STAFF SUBJECT TO ROUTINE TESTING**

CMS testing guidance references the term “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses.” Staff are considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.

### Recommended Boosters

1<sup>st</sup> booster, preferably of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine:

- For most people at least 5 months after the final dose in the primary series

2nd booster of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine

- For adults ages 50 years and older at least 4 months after the 1st booster

As a result of this guidance, staff who are fully vaccinated and eligible for a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> booster, *but who are not boosted*, must be tested routinely based on the community transmission rates in your facility’s county, along with those who are not fully vaccinated and those who are unvaccinated (i.e., exempt).

**These requirements apply to SNFs only.** IL and ACF\ALR staff are not covered by this requirement, and based on the recommendations from our Infection Control Preventionists, including them in the testing requirement would not increase the effectiveness of our Infection Control program. The vaccines and boosters better protect staff from infection, serious illness, hospitalization and death but is not an effective way to eliminate the risk of transmission to others if the staff member is infected with COVID-19. We will best protect our staff and residents if the focus and use of our resources are used for IC prevention and early detection of symptomatic staff. Routine testing of asymptomatic staff solely based on vaccination status is not an effective strategy for preventing COVID from entering our facilities.

**Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals by County COVID-19 Level of Community Transmission**

Level of COVID-19 Community Transmission	Minimum Testing Frequency of Staff <i>who are not up-to-date</i> <sup>+</sup>
Low (blue)	Not recommended
Moderate (yellow)	Once a week*
Substantial (orange)	Twice a week*
High (red)	Twice a week*

<sup>+</sup>Staff *who are up-to-date* do not need to be routinely tested.

\*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

Good Shepherd will be following this guidance, and will be testing SNF employees are not up to date including those who have not received the booster with frequency based on the new guidance.

Broome County shows a **high** level of transmission, necessitating **twice a week** testing for SNF staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

Chenango County show a **high** level of transmission, necessitating **twice a week** testing for SNF staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

### NYS Mask Mandate

The Governor has lifted the mask mandate for businesses, but noted Counties, Cities and businesses can choose to continue to require masks. The mask requirement remains in effect for the following:

- State regulated Health Care Settings
- State regulated Adult Care Facilities and Nursing Homes

- Correctional Facilities
- Schools and Child Care Centers
- Homeless Shelters
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Buses and bus stations, trains and train stations, subways and subway stations, and planes and airports

**Given the Broome County statistics reported above, we are still concerned that the Community Transmission Level is at **High**, and given our vulnerable population, we will continue to require masks for both staff and residents in Independent Living at both GSFH and GSVE when in public areas other than when seated for drinks or a meal. We will re-evaluate this policy on a regular basis.**

Thank you

Patti Mackey

GSC COO

Dave Fawns

GSC VP of HR