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March 24, 2021

To All Staff:

## TESTING

Each week we will provide you with updated information on COVID-19 testing at all of our campuses.

We will no longer be presenting the charts for testing for cause and mass testing but will continue to provide narratives for any new positive cases.

### *Staff Testing 3/17/21-3/23/21*

In the last round of staff testing, we had the following positive results:

*GSFH*

3/17/21

A clinical employee who works on our long term care unit (Cameo Court) in the Skilled Nursing Facility tested positive. This employee is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. There were 15 residents who were considered close contacts with the positive staff member. This was a “low level” exposure due to the PPE being used by the staff member at the time of the contact. Any close contacts will follow Department of Health instructions regarding quarantine. All close contacts have been notified and all families are also being contacted. **This required us to pause our Skilled Nursing Facility visitation on our long term care unit (Cameo Court) until further notice.**

3/23/21

A CNA on the Rehab Unit tested positive. No resident or staff exposures as everyone was wearing proper PPE. However, this does require us to pause visitation on the Rehab Unit.

*Chase:* No new positive test results

*GSVE:* No new positive test results during the reporting period, but today we did receive a positive staff test result for an IL staff member that we will include in next week’s summary. There are no implications for visitation.

### *Resident Testing 3/17/21-3/23/21*

*GSFH*

3/17/21

As a result of the positive staff member, we were required to conduct mass resident testing. Unfortunately, one of our residents on our Rehab unit tested positive. The resident has mild symptoms and will be on isolation for 14 days. There were no staff or residents considered close contacts of the positive resident due to PPE in use. Based on evolving guidelines, NYS DOH did not require us to close the Rehab Unit to visitation at this point as the resident was a new admission and her exposure was not in the facility.

*Chase:* No new positive test results.

*GSVE:* No new positive tests results.

## COVID related Deaths 3/17/21-3/23/21

*GSFH:* We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSFH.

*Chase:* We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at Chase.

*GSVE:* We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSVE.

## Vaccination

- **SNF and ACF**
  - In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE) and Chenango County (Chase), NYS through the local health department is supplying vaccines for new residents, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines.
- **Independent Living**
  - **The Medicine Shoppe, our Long Term Care Pharmacy has offered clinics for our IL residents.**
    - GSFH: All apartment residents who elected to receive the vaccine received the vaccine.
    - GSVE: All IL residents who elected to receive the vaccine have received it.
  - NYS residents over 65 or with certain underlying conditions are also eligible to be vaccinated at other sites. To explore eligibility, available sites and learn how to schedule an appointment, access this link: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>
- **Staff**
  - The federal program which supplied vaccines for staff is ending, and we are transitioning into a new phase of the staff vaccination program. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE) and Chenango County (Chase), NYS through the local health department will supply vaccines for new staff or staff who had previously declined the vaccine, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines.

We continue to educate our employees on the vaccines effectiveness and safety record, and to advocate for our employees to help protect themselves and our residents by being vaccinated. There will be no cost to employees for this vaccination.

While this is not mandatory for our residents or staff, **we are hoping all of our eligible residents and staff will elect to be vaccinated unless there are contraindications. And please note that of the 3 most recent staff members to test positive, none had been vaccinated.**



All 6 living US Presidents, both Republicans and Democrats, have now endorsed vaccination against COVID-19, with President Trump being the most recent President to make a direct appeal to the American people to get vaccinated. And all 6 Presidents and First Ladies have received their vaccines. **Vaccination is not a political issue!!**

- **Current Vaccination Statistics:**

Vaccination Status					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	96.4% on Cameo Court and 93.8% on Rehab	98.1%	51.6%	48.7%	n/a
GSVE	96%	96.0%	82.0%	51.0%	74.0%
Chase	98%	n/a	37% 44% have declined and 19% want to wait for the Johnson and Johnson one shot vaccine	n/a	n/a

## NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)

Per the DOH guidelines for COVID testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. The new week starts today, Wednesday, March 24, which will run March 24-30. When scheduling or planning your appointments to be tested, **please keep the week dates in mind in order to be in compliance with the Executive Orders and DOH guidance regarding week testing.**

The testing times for each campus will be as follows next week will vary significantly due to the holiday:

<u>GSFH</u>		<u>GSVE</u>		<u>Chase</u>
Tuesday	2-4pm	Monday	2-4pm	Monday 6-8am & 1-4pm
Wednesday	7-9am	Tuesday	2-4pm	Thursday 6-8am & 1-4pm
Thursday	2-4pm	Wednesday	2-4pm	
Friday	7-9am	Friday	2-4pm	

**If you miss the weekly testing, you cannot work and will not receive any pay, including benefit time, until you are tested. This includes using benefit time that was pre-approved for any time you are non-compliant prior to being tested.** Please understand we are taking this strong stance not to be punitive, but because NYS DOH will be monitoring our compliance with the testing requirements, and any non-compliance among our employees can result in the facility itself being penalized.

In addition, if you had a positive test result within the last 90 days, for GSVE, GSFH, and GSC please contact the HR Wellness RN, and for Chase please contact the DON, to make arrangements to get a rapid antigen test. This is the manner in which you will be tested for the next 90 days.

Please help us meet this NYS DOH requirement by planning ahead and taking responsibility to be in compliance even if you are scheduled to be out for some portion of the testing week. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Effective immediately, ACF and IL staff will only be required to test once a week. SNF employees are still required to test twice per week. If you are unclear as to which level of care you are assigned, please see or call your manager, or reference the postings near the time clocks. In the future, we will be identifying those levels of care by color coded stickers to attach to your badge. These are on order and will be distributed when they arrive.**

## NYS Quarantine Travel Restrictions

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced guidelines in November allowing out-of-state travelers to New York to “test out” of the mandatory 14-day quarantine. Travelers from states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut) that are contiguous with New York will continue to be exempt from the travel advisory.

Per NYS, asymptomatic Health Care Professionals returning from travel to a non-contiguous state or a country or territory subject to a CDC Level 2 or higher COVID-19 risk assessment level or for which the COVID-19 risk level is designated by the CDC as unknown may return to work consistent with the essential worker requirements set forth in the Department’s travel advisory, however such Health Care Professionals shall receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19 within 24 hours of arrival in New York and again on the fourth day after their return.

In addition, if you do become ill, NYS COVID pay is not available per NYS guidelines because you have traveled to a high risk area as defined by NYS.

**We are highly recommending for the health and welfare of our residents and staff members that you adhere to the travel restrictions.** We all have a responsibility to our fellow New Yorkers, our co-workers, and our residents, to do our part to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

## Aegis Lab (Reminder)

Aegis Lab is an independent laboratory that performs our weekly COVID-19 diagnostic testing. The sample swab is submitted to Aegis Lab along with your insurance information. Unfortunately, it has been brought to our attention that Excellus, and perhaps other insurance carriers are mailing the check to the individual instead of paying Aegis directly for

the testing services provided. You should receive a letter from Aegis Lab indicating that these funds belong to Aegis and must be remitted to them immediately. Therefore, you must deposit the check that you received from your insurance carrier and make a payment at: <https://aegis.synergypay.com>, to avoid further actions. . If you don't receive a letter from Aegis, but you did receive a check from your insurance carrier, please call Aegis at 833-230-4420. Aegis will be tracking payments against their list of those impacted.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but the situation was not under ours or Aegis' control.

**Furloughed Staff**

Furloughing is no longer having a major impact on facility staffing, so we will no longer be reporting on this metric. Of course, if this changes, we will re-introduce this.

**Positivity Rates and COVID Zones**

CMS positivity rates by county is the metric used for visitation per NYS. Note CMS stats lag one week behind.

Percent Positive and Tests in prior 14 days:		Data from March 3-March 16								
County	FIPS	State	FEMA Region	Population	NCHS Urban Rural Classification	Tests in prior 14 days	14-day test rate	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 day	
Broome County, NY	36007	NY	2	190,488	Small metro	15,094	7,924	4.9%	Green	
Chenango County, NY	36017	NY	2	47,207	Non-core	4,405	9,331	2.9%	Green	

Currently, none of our facilities are in a COVID cluster hot spot.

**Screening Question Reminder.....**

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that presents with a wide range of symptoms. Fever is common, but not always present when an individual is infected with COVID-19. Diarrhea can also be a symptom which many people might not associate with COVID-19. GSC has implemented a symptom screening process to help identify any staff that should remain out of work. Please, be mindful of the symptoms we screen for when reporting to work. If you have developed symptoms, which are NEW and/or UNUSUAL for you, WITH or WITHOUT a fever, please notify your supervisor before reporting to work.

**In addition, it is very important that you are truthful when answering the screening questions. Failure to answer them truthfully could cause a co-worker, or resident to become ill with COVID, and if the misrepresentation is confirmed, will result in termination.**



We really appreciate your on-going commitment to Good Shepherd-thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,

Linda Parke  
 Director of Human Resources