



May 5, 2021

To All Staff:

### **Change in Schedule for COVID Letters**

Effective this month, we will be moving to generating the COVID letters for residents, families and staff every two weeks rather than the current weekly schedule. Of course, we will continue to do broadcasts of any positive test results as required and will also update any changes to the visitation schedule on a timely basis.

### **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 4/28/21-5/4/21***

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

*GSFH*: No new positive test results

*Chase*: No new positive test results

*GSVE*: No new positive test results

#### ***Resident Testing 4/28/21-5/4/21***

*GSFH*: No new positive test results.

*Chase*: No new positive test results.

*GSVE*: No new positive tests results.

#### **COVID related Deaths 4/28/21-5/4/21**

*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 have received the vaccine.
  - GSVE: All IL residents who elected to receive the vaccine have received it.
- As of 4/6/21, NYS residents age 16 or older were eligible to be vaccinated at other sites. For those 16-17, the only approved vaccine is the Pfizer vaccine. 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 ended, and we are in 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.

**Current Vaccination Statistics:** Please note these figures are very fluid as we have new admissions, discharges, new hires, terminated employees, etc. We are holding regular vaccine clinics to allow new residents and staff to get vaccinated, as well as people who may have changed their minds since previous clinics.

**Vaccination Status as of  
5/4/21**

	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	100%	100%	65%	56%	n/a
GSVE	100%	97%	79%	57%	75%
Chase	100%	n/a	53%	n/a	n/a

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. **Help us reach herd immunity!!**

**NYS Re-Opening Update:** Significant Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions (source [www.governor.ny.gov](http://www.governor.ny.gov))

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont yesterday announced a significant easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on the region's businesses, venues and gatherings given significant progress in vaccinations and sustained reduction in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

Social Distance-based Business Capacities

Effective May 19, most business capacities—which are currently based upon percentage of maximum occupancy—will be removed in New York and New Jersey. Businesses will only be limited by the space available for patrons or parties of patrons to maintain the required social distance of 6 feet. This new distance-based maximum capacity will apply across commercial settings, including retail, food services, gyms and fitness centers, amusement and family entertainment, hair salons, barber shops and other personal care services, among other settings. It will also apply in houses of worship.

Increase in Social and Residential Gathering Limits

In New York beginning May 10, the outdoor social gathering limit will increase from 200 to 500 people. Beginning May 19, the indoor social gathering limit will increase from 100 to 250 people. Also, the outdoor residential gathering limit of 25 people will be removed, reverting to the social gathering limit of 500 people with space for appropriate social distancing, and the indoor residential gathering limit will increase from 10 to 50 people. In New York, any event gatherings in excess of the social gathering limits may only occur if all individuals present proof of full vaccination status or recent negative COVID-19 test result.

## Event Venues

Congregate commercial and social events in New York—such as those at venues that host sports competitions, performing arts and live entertainment, and catered receptions—can exceed the social gathering limits of 500 people outdoors or 250 people indoors if all attendees over the age of 4 present either proof of full vaccination status or recent negative COVID-19 test result and the required social distancing can be accommodated.

Starting May 19, large-scale indoor event venues will operate at 30 percent capacity, which is an increase from the current 10 percent capacity limit. Large-scale outdoor event venues will operate at 33 percent. Social distancing, masks, and other applicable health protocols will still apply, including the requirement of attendee proof of full vaccination or recent negative COVID-19 test result.

## Industry Reopening Requirements

While most industry capacity restrictions will be lifted, industry-specific requirements will remain in effect for a longer period of time, including state or local health authority event notification, health screening, contact information for tracing, enhanced air handling and building system standards, hand hygiene, and environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols. The State will continue to provide additional guidance on these provisions as they apply to each industry.

*Social distancing, masks, health screenings and all other health and safety protocols remain in effect.*

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

Per the DOH guidelines for COVID-19 testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. The new week starts today, Wednesday, April 7, April 7-13. 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.** **Please note: Effective immediately at GSVE, there will no longer be testing on Tuesdays.**

### The GSFH

Tuesday 2-4pm  
Wednesday 7-9am  
Thursday 2-4pm  
Friday 7-9am

### GSVE

Monday 2-4pm  
Wednesday 2-4pm  
Friday 2-4pm

### Chase

Monday 6-8am & 1-4pm  
Thursday 6-8am & 1-4pm

**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.

ACF and IL staff are 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 COVID Travel Restrictions (Revised 4/10/21)**

On 4/10/21, the NYS DOH released the following:

## General Updates and Definition

- Fully vaccinated is defined as being 2 or more weeks after the final dose (e.g., first for Janssen/Johnson & Johnson, second for Pfizer and Moderna) of the vaccine approved by the FDA or authorized by the FDA for emergency use.
  - Vaccines that are not authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use or approved by the FDA do not satisfy this definition.
- Recently recovered is defined as 1) recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 by meeting the criteria for discontinuation of isolation, 2) within the 3-month period between date of arrival in New York and either the initial onset of symptoms related to the laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection or, if asymptomatic during the illness, the date of the laboratory confirmed test, and 3) asymptomatic after travel or new exposure.
- CDC and NYS recommend delaying international travel until the traveler is fully vaccinated.
- All travelers must complete the NYS Travel Form unless the traveler had left New York for less than 24 hours or is coming to New York from a contiguous state (i.e., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont).

## Domestic Travel

- Domestic travel is defined as travel lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories other than contiguous states (i.e., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont).
- There are generally no quarantine, work furlough, or testing requirements for asymptomatic domestic travelers. Exceptions:
  - Unvaccinated health care personnel who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months and who work in nursing homes, enhanced assisted living residences (EALRs) or assisted living programs (ALPs) must furlough for 14 days after arrival in New York, consistent with CDC recommendations to avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe disease for 14 days after travel.
  - All unvaccinated domestic travelers who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months are recommended to get tested 3-5 days after arrival in New York, consider non-mandated self-quarantine (7 days if tested on day 3-5, otherwise 10 days), and avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe disease for 14 days, regardless of test result.

## International Travel

All international travelers must comply with all CDC requirements, which currently include proof of negative test or recent COVID recovery in order to board airplanes headed to the US.

- Currently CDC does not require quarantine, work furlough, or testing requirements for asymptomatic international travelers.
- New York follows that recommendation with the following exceptions:
  - Unvaccinated health care personnel who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months and who work in nursing homes, enhanced assisted living residences (EALRs) or assisted living programs (ALPs) must furlough for 14 days after arrival in New York from international travel, consistent with CDC recommendations to avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe disease for 14 days after travel.
  - Unvaccinated health care personnel who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months working in all other health care settings must furlough for 7 days with a test on day 3-5 after arrival in New York from international travel, or furlough for 10 days if not tested.
  - Fully vaccinated individuals who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months are recommended to get tested 3-5 days after arrival in New York from international travel.
  - All unvaccinated international travelers who have not recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months are recommended to get tested 3-5 days after arrival in New York, consider non-mandated self-quarantine (7 days if tested on day 3-5, otherwise 10 days), and avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe disease for 14 days, regardless of test result.

- Travelers from Canada, crossing at land borders subject to the agreement between the governments of the United States and Canada, are permitted to travel in accordance with said federal agreement and need not quarantine solely due to such federally authorized travel.

**Recommendations for non-mandated self-quarantine**

- As noted above, in some situations quarantine may be recommended but not required.
- For situations where quarantine is recommended under this guidance, employers may develop policies for travel that either do or do not require furlough of affected staff.
- In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 202.60, as extended, any New York State resident who voluntarily travels to another state or country for travel that was not taken as part of the person’s employment nor at the direction of the person’s employer, will not be eligible for benefits under New York’s COVID-19 paid sick leave law, although an employer may voluntarily provide such leave.
- Regardless of any employer furlough requirements, individuals should self-quarantine when not at work, avoiding large gatherings or exposure to individuals at high risk.

**Precautions for All Travelers**

Irrespective of quarantine or vaccination status, all travelers should:

- Monitor symptoms daily from day of arrival in New York through day 14;
- Continue strict adherence to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings, through Day 14 (even if fully vaccinated); and
- Immediately self-isolate if any symptoms develop and contact the local public health authority or their health care provider to report this change in clinical status and determine if they should seek testing.

**We have highlighted above in red information specific to unvaccinated health care personnel who have not recently recovered from COVID to emphasize that your vaccination status will determine your travel restrictions. One more reason to consider getting vaccinated.**

**Positivity Rates and COVID Zones as of 4/20/21**

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

County	Populatio~	NCHS Urban Rural Classification	Tests in prior 14 days	14-day test ra	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 da
Broome County, NY	190,488	Small metro	14,773	7,755	5.1%	Yellow
Chenango County, NY	47,207	Non-core	5,055	10,708	3.8%	Green

**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