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[www.GoodShepherdCommunities.org](http://www.GoodShepherdCommunities.org)



June 2, 2021

To All Staff:

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

Effective in May, we moved to generating the COVID letters for residents, families and staff every two weeks rather than the 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 5/19/21-6/1/21***

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 5/19/21-6/1/21***

*GSFH:* On 5/27/21, we learned that one of our residents who resides on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor ALP unit *tested positive for COVID-19*. This resident remains hospitalized.

*Chase:* No new positive test results.

*GSVE:* No new positive tests results.

#### ***COVID related Deaths 5/19/21-6/1/21***

*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. As of 5/12/21, eligibility was expanded to include those 12-15. For those 12-17, 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 6/1/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	95%	100%	64%	61%	n/a
GSVE	100%	100%	82%	70%	75%
Chase	90% fully vaccinated and 6% with 1st dose	n/a		56% and 5% with 1st dose	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:

New CDC Guidelines were announced on 5/13/21, and NYS announced that effective 5/19/21, NYS will also adopt these guidelines.

The guidance was updated to reflect that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Individual businesses can continue to require

masks. The Department of Health strongly recommends masks in indoor settings where vaccination status of individuals is unknown.

**The following CDC recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings.**

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Resume activities without wearing masks or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance
- Resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel
- Refrain from testing before leaving the United States for international travel (unless required by the destination) and refrain from self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States
- Refrain from testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic, with some exceptions for specific settings
- Refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic
- Refrain from routine screening testing if feasible

For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:

- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations

**Unvaccinated individuals, under both CDC and state guidance, must wear masks in all public settings.**

**In NYS, consistent with the CDC guidance, Pre-K to 12 schools, public transit, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and healthcare settings will continue to follow State's existing COVID-19 health guidelines until more New Yorkers are fully vaccinated.**

GSC is currently reviewing this new guidance, but at this time we will not be changing our current policy of requiring masks in all public areas, including those located in Independent Living, regardless of vaccination status. **As a private business, we have the right to require mask use in public spaces.** Our Independent Living areas are part of larger healthcare campuses, and in the past, NYS Department of Health has viewed them as subject to their scrutiny. In addition, staff move between the levels of care.

We will review this position on an ongoing basis as further guidance specific to our industry becomes available and update everyone in two weeks. We have reached out to LeadingAgeNY to see how other multilevel facilities are handling this, and we discuss this at our weekly senior management COVID meetings.

**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, June 2, 2021 through Tuesday, June 15, 2021. 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.**

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 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 3 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 5/25/21**

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

County	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 day
Broome County, NY	2.6%	Green
Chenango County, NY	1.9%	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