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June 16, 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 6/2/21-6/15/21

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 6/2/21-6/15/21

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 6/2/21-6/15/21

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

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

GSVE: We are happy to report there were no COVID 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 have access to the J&J vaccine, so if staff prefer the single shot, we can arrange for it.

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 6/15/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	82% on Rehab and 100% on cameo Court	100%	71%	63%	n/a
GSVE	100%	100%	87%	70%	80%
Chase	97%	n/a	62% fully vaccinated and 1.5% had first shot	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!!**

Delta Variant

The Delta variant — which appears to be both more contagious than earlier versions of the virus — is spreading rapidly within the U.S., after having first been identified in India. It now accounts for about 10 percent of cases.

In addition to being more contagious, Delta also appears to be more severe.

But the good news is **the vaccines continue to work extremely well against the variants such as the Delta variant**, based on the evidence so far. The best performing vaccines vastly reduce the number of COVID cases of any kind, reduce hospitalizations and **virtually eliminate death**.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)

Effective immediately we are required to continue testing **only those personnel who are not fully vaccinated** twice per week for SNF and once per week for ACF.

This means that anyone who is fully vaccinated (two weeks from complete vaccination) does not need to be tested! One more reason to get vaccinated!!

Anyone who is not fully vaccinated must continue to test per the previous guidance; twice per week in SNF for anyone working more than 3 days and once per week for ACF and IL.

Testing will continue for any staff or residents who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or upon identification of any single new COVID-19 case in SNF, all staff and residents will be tested immediately and per CMS guideline. Per the DOH guidelines for COVID-19 testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. The new week starts today, Wednesday, June 16, 2021 through Tuesday, June 30, 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.**

GSVE: POC Testing will be available through the HR Wellness office (Britnee) Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-3:30 pm. If you have unvaccinated staff who cannot make this time, then the manager can complete the POC test.

GSFH: POC Testing will be available in Jen Graef's office Mon-Fri 1:30-3:30 pm, and arrangements have been made for the House Charge Nurse to test the night shift employees.

Chase: Monday 6-8 am & 1-4 pm and Thursday 6-8 am & 1-4 pm

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.

NYS Re-Opening Update:

New York hit its 70% COVID vaccination rate benchmark on 6/14/21, [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows](#). This means virtually all restrictions and safety requirements across commercial and social settings will be lifted (but not healthcare), including remaining capacity limits, social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting mandates, health screenings and contact tracing.

However, mask requirements will remain in effect in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Some restrictions will also continue in places such as schools, large venues, public transit, homeless shelters, correctional facilities and *health care facilities*.

What does this mean for our campuses?

Effective immediately:

Chase: As a Skilled Nursing Facility, all restrictions remain in place. We will no longer require vaccinated staff members to test, but all staff must continue to be screened and to socially distance. Residents will continue to wear masks.

GSFH: As a multilevel campus contained within a single building with shared spaces, we will continue to treat Independent Living consistently with Health Care. We will no longer require vaccinated staff members to test, but all staff must continue to be screened and to socially distance. Residents will continue to wear masks.

GSVE: Unlike GSFH, GSVE is a CCRC with separate buildings and entrances for Health Care and Independent Living. We have reviewed guidance for similar CCRCs, and will be amending our protocols as follows:

IL Residents: Fully vaccinated residents will not be required to wear masks or to social distance, and there are no limits on dining room capacity. IL residents visiting in Health Care will be treated consistently with all other visitors.

IL Staff: Fully vaccinated staff will not be required to be screened, wear masks or to social distance when in the IL building. They will be required to be screened and to wear masks and socially distance if they enter the health care building. Unvaccinated staff will continue to test, screen, wear masks, and socially distance when in either building.

We will review this position on an ongoing basis as further guidance specific to our industry becomes available and update everyone in two weeks.

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.

Excelsior Pass (source: NYS DOH website)

Get Back to Your Favorite Businesses and Venues with Digital Proof of Your COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Results

Attend sporting events, arts performances and more! Excelsior Pass supports a safe reopening of New York by providing a free, fast and secure way to present digital proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test results. Think of it as a mobile airline boarding pass, but for proving you received a COVID-19 vaccination or negative test.

You can store your Pass digitally on your smartphone with the Excelsior Pass Wallet app, available for free from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. You can also print your Pass from the [Excelsior Pass website](#) and bring it with you.

Businesses and venues can scan and validate your pass to ensure you meet any COVID-19 vaccination or testing requirements for entry. Along with your Pass, you'll be asked to show a photo ID that shows your name and birth date to verify that the Pass belongs to you. Adults may hold passes for accompanying minors.

Once you and your party enter an establishment, you will still be asked to follow State and CDC guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene.

Participation in Excelsior Pass is voluntary. New Yorkers can always show alternate proof of vaccination or testing, like another mobile application or paper form, directly at a business or venue.

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones as of 6/8/21

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	1.5%	Green
Chenango County, NY	1.3%	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.

Compelling Reasons to Get Vaccinated:

- 1. No more required testing!**
- 2. Effective against serious illness, hospitalizations and death even against the new very contagious Delta variant.**
- 3. Get the NYS Excelsior pass- increased access to NYS venues and businesses.**
- 4. No furlough or testing requirements for vaccinated health care personnel when returning from domestic or international travel.**



Blue Cross Blue Shield Settlement Notice

You may have received an email or letter stating something such as “If you purchased or were enrolled in a Blue Cross or Blue Shield health insurance or administrative services plan between 2008 and 2020, a \$2.67 billion Settlement may affect your rights” and wondered what this is about and whether it is legitimate. We have researched this, and it is a legitimate settlement and some of you may be eligible.

You may be eligible to receive payment if you are an Individual, Insured Group (and their employees) or Self-Funded Account (and their employees) that purchased or were enrolled in a Blue Cross or Blue Shield health insurance or administrative services plan during one of the two Settlement Class Periods. Government accounts are excluded from the Class.

The Settlement Class Period for Individuals and Insured Groups is from February 7, 2008, through October 16, 2020. The Settlement Class Period for Self-Funded Accounts is from September 1, 2015 through October 16, 2020. Dependents, beneficiaries (including minors), and non-employees are NOT eligible to receive payment.

All Individuals, Insured Groups, and Self-Funded Accounts that purchased or were enrolled in a Blue Cross or Blue Shield health insurance or administrative services plan during the applicable Class Period will also benefit from the parts of the Settlement requiring Settling Defendants to change certain of their practices that were alleged to be anticompetitive. Dependents, beneficiaries (including minors), and non-employees will benefit from this part of the Settlement.

For more details about who is affected visit www.BCBSsettlement.com

What can you get from the Settlement?

Class Members who submit valid claims may receive a cash payment from the Net Settlement Fund. The Net Settlement Fund is estimated to be approximately \$1.9 billion. This is after deducting attorneys' fees, administration expenses and other costs from the \$2.67 billion Settlement Fund. For more details on the Plan of Distribution, read the Long Form Notice available at www.BCBSsettlement.com. You can also call (888) 681-1142. Settling Defendants also agreed to make changes in the way they do business to increase the opportunities for competition in the market for health insurance.

How do you get a payment?

You must submit a valid claim online at www.BCBSsettlement.com or postmarked by mail no later than November 5, 2021. Claim Forms are available at www.BCBSsettlement.com or may be requested by calling (888) 681-1142.

Please note Good Shepherd is planning to file a claim on the organization's behalf, but it is up to each employee to file their own claim if they are interested in doing so. Given the volume of potential claimants, unfortunately GSC cannot offer to assist these filings on an individual basis.



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

Sincerely,

Linda Parke
Director of Human Resources