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June 30, 2021

To All Staff:

Given the reduced frequency of positive tests results, we will be changing the frequency of these letters to monthly unless something occurs which requires an immediate update, such as a positive test or significant change in policy. Letters will be issued the last Wednesday of each month.

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 6/16/21-6/29/21

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 6/16/21-6/29/21

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 6/16/21-6/29/21

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.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)

Effective 6/25/21 we are required to continue testing **only those personnel who are not fully vaccinated once per month in Health Care**. As previously reported, anyone who is fully vaccinated (two weeks from complete vaccination) does not need to be tested.

However, unlicensed personnel can no longer administer the tests.

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.

GSVE: POC Testing will be available through the HR Wellness office (Britnee) or HCN. More details will be sent to management soon.

GSFH: POC Testing will be available in Teresa Cole's office. She will be contacting all Supervisors in regards to scheduling unvaccinated staff for monthly testing, and will be scheduling multiple testing days and times per month to include overnight, day, and evenings.

Chase: Thursday 1-3pm or by appointment with the House Charge RN

If you miss the required 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.

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.

Termination of NYS Executive Orders Relating to COVID

The Governor issued an Executive Order rescinding the Executive Orders issued in connection with the COVID public health emergency effective June 25th. While COVID is still a threat, and a national public health emergency still exists, this is a positive step. But it does leave Long Term Care facilities with a number of questions. LeadingAgeNY has submitted a series of recommendations to DOH and the Governor's staff, but many questions remain unresolved. The following is our understanding of the current state of key COVID-related requirements applicable to LTC providers. **Please note that new guidance may emerge over the next few days or week:**

- Testing: Weekly and twice-weekly routine testing of unvaccinated nursing home (NH) and adult care facility (ACF) staff is no longer required. However, **unvaccinated NH staff must still be tested routinely in accordance with CMS Guidelines**. Under the CMS requirements, routine testing is required **monthly** in counties with a positivity rate of less than 5% in prior week. The latest CMS data indicate that all NYS counties are well below 5%.
- Visitation:
 - SNFs and ACFs should continue to follow their current practices until we hear otherwise. We hope that in the near future, we will be required to follow CMS guidance on visitation and communal activities, which allow for greater social contact and unmasking among vaccinated residents, but this has not been clarified yet.
 - The regulations providing enhanced access for personal caregiving visitors apply **only** during a state public health emergency. While SNFs and ACFs must develop policies and procedures and allow the designation of caregivers, we believe that the provision *requiring* enhanced visitation

by personal caregiving visitors is no longer in effect with the conclusion of the PHE. Compassionate care visits are still authorized in SNFs pursuant to federal CMS guidelines and may be authorized under existing ACF regulations.

- Resident/Family Notification of COVID Cases and Deaths: ACFs and SNFs are no longer required to provide these notifications under the state EO or guidance which required notification within 24 hours. However, SNFs must continue to follow the federal notification requirements which requires notification by 5pm the next day. ACFs should follow standard requirements related to communication with residents and families concerning health status and facility conditions.

NYS Mandated Staff Testing

Effective 6/25/21 we are required to continue testing **only those personnel who are not fully vaccinated** once per month in Health Care. This means that anyone who is fully vaccinated (two weeks from complete vaccination) does not need to be tested! We are pleased that NYS has changed this burdensome requirement to more closely align with CDC guidance.

NYS Re-Opening Update: What does this mean for our campuses?

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 and staff 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 and staff 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. Vaccinated guests will be allowed in the dining venues. Proof of vaccination status will be required. 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.

Health Care: 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 and staff will continue to wear masks.

We will review this position on an ongoing basis as further guidance specific to our industry becomes available.

NYS COVID Travel Restrictions (Revised 6/25/21)

As of June 25, 2021, the New York State Travel Advisory is no longer in effect. As such, travelers arriving in New York are no longer required to submit traveler health forms.

Domestic Travel

- 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.

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. If you were vaccinated at a Good Shepherd Clinic, when asked for the County you were vaccinated in, it may not be where you were physically vaccinated but the county the vaccinating team is from. Please try Cortland or Tompkins County. If you have difficulty, see your facilities Infection Preventionist and they can look the county up for 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 6/22/21

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

County	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	190,488	Small metro	8,790	4,614	0.6%	Green
Chenango County, NY	47,207	Non-core	2,714	5,749	0.7%	Green

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.

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**.

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 6/29/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	89% on Rehab and 100% on Cameo Court	100%	71%	67%	n/a
GSVE	100%	100%	84%	67%	83%
Chase	96%	n/a	60%	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!!**

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.**



Myths about the COVID Vaccine (source: CDC website)

Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I would like to have a baby one day?

Yes. If you are trying to become pregnant now or want to get pregnant in the future, you may get a COVID-19 vaccine when one is available to you.

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. In addition, there is no evidence that fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines.

Like all vaccines, scientists are studying COVID-19 vaccines carefully for side effects now and will continue to study them for many years.



Can receiving a COVID-19 vaccine cause you to be magnetic?

No. Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine will not make you magnetic, including at the site of vaccination which is usually your arm. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys, as well as any manufactured products such as microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes, and nanowire semiconductors. In addition, the typical dose for a COVID-19 vaccine is less than a milliliter, which is not enough to allow magnets to be attracted to your vaccination site even if the vaccine was filled with a magnetic metal.



Do any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States shed or release any of their components?

No. Vaccine shedding is the term used to describe the release or discharge of any of the vaccine components in or outside of the body. Vaccine shedding can only occur when a vaccine contains a weakened version of the virus. None of the vaccines authorized for use in the United States contain a live virus. Vaccine components are not shed by COVID-19 vaccines, so it is not possible for any of the vaccine components to accumulate in the body's tissue or organs, including the ovaries.

The mRNA and viral vector vaccines are the two types of currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines available.



Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

There are currently two types of COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized and recommended for use in the United States: messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines and a viral vector vaccine. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. All COVID-19 vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.

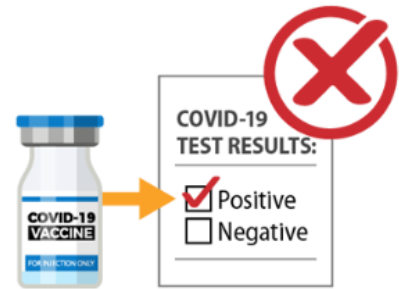


Learn more about [how mRNA COVID-19 vaccines work](#).

Will getting a COVID-19 vaccine cause me to test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test?

No. None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines cause you to test positive on [viral tests](#), which are used to see if you have a **current infection**. Neither can any of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States. Vaccinations protect most people from getting sick. However, a small percentage of fully vaccinated people will still get COVID-19. There is some evidence that vaccination may make illness less severe in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.

If your body develops an immune response to vaccination, which is the goal, you may test positive on some [antibody tests](#). Antibody tests indicate you had a **previous infection** and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.



Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the authorized and recommended [COVID-19 vaccines or COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States](#) contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine **cannot** make you sick with COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are signs that the body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Learn more about [how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).



It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

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