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July 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 week of each month.

TESTING

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Staff Testing 7/1/21-7/30/21

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

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase :

- 7/24/21: One of our employees in the recreation department tested positive for COVID19. The employee will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff were considered to be a close contact. Two residents were considered to be a close contact.

GSVE:

- 7/27/21: An employee in the Assisted Living Residence tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is symptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. Contact tracing is complete and no staff or residents were identified as close contacts.

Resident Testing 7/1/21-7/30/21

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: 7/1/19.

- A resident in the Assisted Living Unit tested positive for COVID-19. The resident remains hospitalized for a non-COVID related medical condition. The resident had previously tested positive for COVID-19 but was beyond the 90 days so this was considered a new case. The resident is also fully vaccinated. Contact tracing is complete; there are no staff or residents considered close contacts.

COVID related Deaths 7/1/21-7/30/21

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)

GSC continues to follow the NYS guidance and require testing for non-vaccinated personnel in SNF twice per week and once per week in ACF.

Testing will be available as follows:

Chase: Thursdays 6-8A and 1-4P

GSVE: POC Testing will be available through the HR Wellness office (Britnee) Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-3:30 pm.

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

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 guidelines.

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.

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones as of 7/20/21

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

County	CMS County Rate	CMS Color Code
Broome County	1.3%	Green
Chenango County	0.3%	Green

Delta Variant

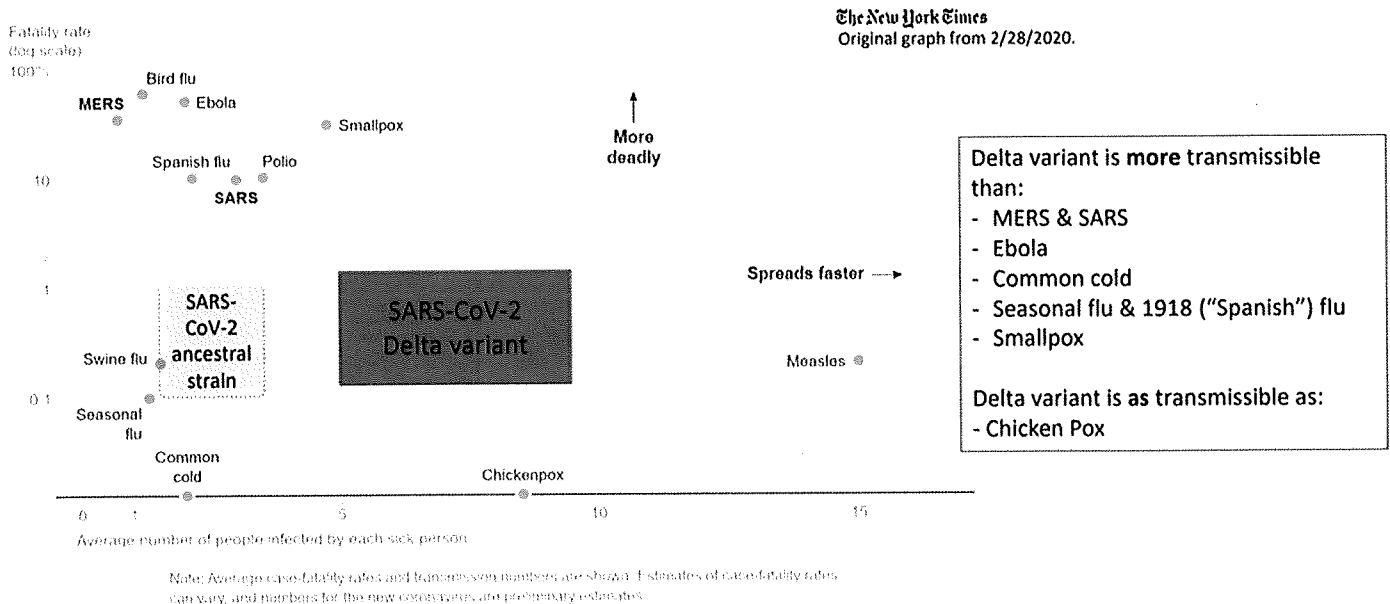
5 Things to Know About the Delta Variant (adopted from Yale Medicine Website)

1. Delta is more contagious than the other virus strains.
2. Unvaccinated people are at risk.
3. Delta could lead to 'hyperlocal outbreaks.' This means the vaccination rate where you live and in adjacent areas matters.
4. There is still more to learn about Delta.
5. Vaccination is the best protection against Delta.

Some vaccinated people are still carrying big loads of the delta variant

The CDC has announced that they have research indicating vaccinated people infected with delta are carrying high viral loads (1000 times that of the original strain)- a new phenomenon, compared with how the original version of the virus behaved. **This means the Delta variant is as contagious as Chicken Pox.**

Transmission of Delta variant vs. ancestral strain and other infectious diseases



With the original alpha variant, infections among vaccinated individuals is exceedingly rare, and vaccinated people didn't have big viral loads, and almost never transmitted the virus to unvaccinated people.

But with the higher viral loads involved with the Delta variant even in vaccinated people, there is a heightened risk that millions of unvaccinated people will contract the virus from a vaccinated person and get more seriously ill.

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.

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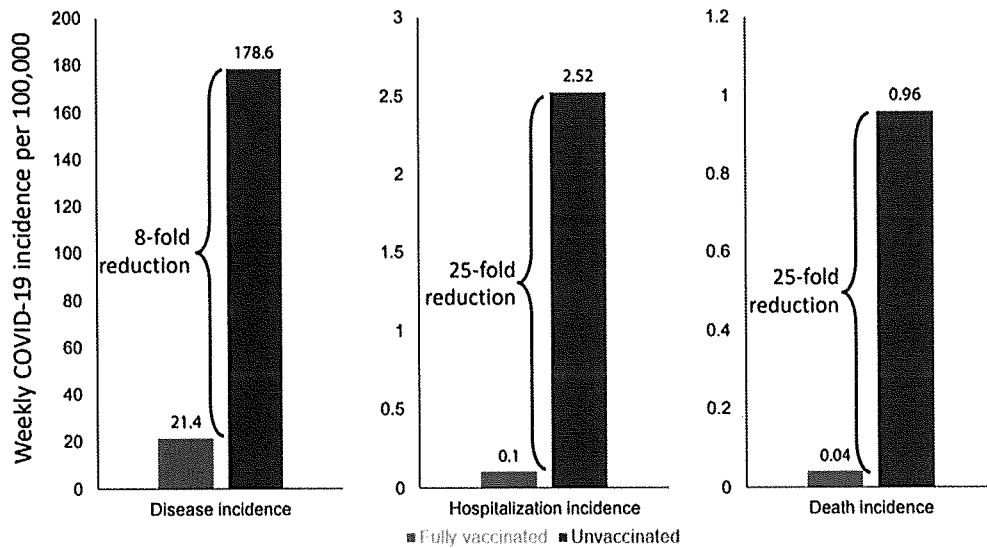
Vaccination Status as of 7/29/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	100% on Rehab and Cameo Court	100%	72%	66%	n/a
GSVE	100%	100%	87%	63%	87%
Chase	95%	n/a	66% with 3% pending	n/a	n/a

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. **Effective against serious illness, hospitalizations and death even against the new very contagious Delta variant.**

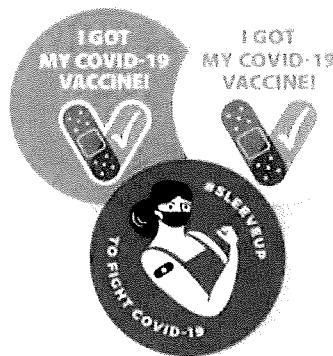
Greater risk of disease, hospitalization and death among unvaccinated vs. vaccinated people: National estimates



At current incidence, 35,000 symptomatic infections per week among 162 million vaccinated Americans

Data from OVID Tracker as of July 25, 2021. Average incidence: 100 cases per 100,000 persons per week. Vaccination effectiveness against symptomatic illness: 85% (range from ref. 1-10 [10/2021]), where $VE = 1 - (VI_{unv} / VI_v)$; Vaccines effectiveness hospitalization or death: 96% (Stevan et al. [18], preprint); Attributable risk: 25% (range from ref. 1-10 [10/21]); Rate in unvaccinated: Community rate of fully vaccinated coverage: 11.1% (fully vaccinated coverage); Rate in fully vaccinated: 11.1%; Rate in unvaccinated: Fully vaccinated coverage proportion: zero from COVID Data Tracker as of July 25, 2021 [10/2021].

1. Get the NYS Excelsior pass- increased access to NYS venues and businesses.
2. In non-health care settings, no need to wear a mask or socially distance in public areas.



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