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April 7, 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 3/31/21-4/6/21

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 3/31/21-4/6/21

GSFH: : No new positive test results.

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 3/31/21-4/6/21

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*.

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

Resident Testing 3/31/21-4/6/21

GSFH: : No new positive test results.

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 3/31/21-4/6/21

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 are 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/](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.

J&J Vaccine

We have been encouraging all our staff members to be vaccinated against COVID19. However, we understand there has been hesitancy on the part of some staff for various reasons. One of the reasons cited was a preference to wait for the single dose J&J vaccine. The FDA approval for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is for people 18-years-old and older. Please help us to protect our residents by getting vaccinated.

CHENANGO COUNTY: Chenango County Health Department received the Janssen vaccine this week, and has appointments available for a clinic this Thursday April 8th.

This is the link to schedule an appointment: <https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19.php#tab-3>.

BROOME COUNTY: Broome County officials also announced appointments are available for J&J vaccine clinics as of yesterday. Officials say appointments are available for April 13 and 14. You can click on <https://gobroomecounty.com/hd/coronavirus/vaccine> to schedule an appointment. You can also call 211 for assistance. Appointments will be held at the SUNY Broome Ice Center at 907 Upper Front St.

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 4/7/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	100% on both Cameo Court and Rehab	98.0%	58.0%	48.0%	n/a
GSVE	100%	100.0%	79.0%	51.0%	74.0%
Chase	100%	n/a	39% vaccinated but 43% have declined and 18% are still considering	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!!**

Why Get Vaccinated?

To Protect Yourself, Your Coworkers, Your Patients, Your Family, and Your Community

- Building defenses against COVID-19 in this facility and in your community is a team effort. And **you** are a key part of that defense.
- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine adds **one more layer of protection** for you, your coworkers, patients, and family.

Here are ways you can **build people's confidence** in the new COVID-19 vaccines in your facility, your community, and at home:

- ✓ **Get vaccinated** and enroll in the **v-safe** text messaging program to help CDC monitor vaccine safety.
- ✓ **Tell others why** you are getting vaccinated and encourage them to get vaccinated.
- ✓ **Learn how to have conversations** about COVID-19 vaccine with coworkers, family, and friends.

It all starts with you.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

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.

<u>The GSFH</u>		<u>GSVE</u>		<u>Chase</u>
Tuesday	2-4pm	Monday	2-4pm	Monday 6-8am & 1-4pm
Wednesday	7-9am	Wednesday	2-4pm	Thursday 6-8am & 1-4pm
Thursday	2-4pm	Friday	2-4pm	
Friday	7-9am			

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 Quarantine Travel Restrictions

Domestic travelers will no longer be required to quarantine after entering New York from another U.S. State or U.S. Territory starting April 1st. While no longer required, the NYS Department of Health still recommends quarantine after domestic travel as an added precaution. Mandatory quarantine remains in effect for international travelers.

All travelers must continue to fill out the Traveler Health Form. Individuals should continue strict adherence to all safety guidelines to stop the spread - wearing masks, socially distancing and avoiding gatherings.

Regardless of quarantine status, all individuals exposed to COVID-19 or returning from travel must:

- Continue daily symptom monitoring 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);
- Must immediately self-isolate if any symptoms develop and contact the local public health authority or their healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status and determine if they should seek testing.

We are highly recommending for the health and welfare of our residents and staff members that you adhere to the travel restrictions. We all have a responsibility to our fellow New Yorkers, our co-workers, and our residents, to do our part to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

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

County	FIPS	State	FEMA Region	Population	NCHS Urban Rural Classification	Tests in prior 14 days	14-day test rate	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 days
Broome County, NY	36007	NY	2	190,488	Small metro	12,679	6,656	5.6%	Yellow
Chenango County, NY	36017	NY	2	47,207	Non-core	4,472	9,473	4.2%	Green

FEMA COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program

This program will launch on April 12, 2021. FEMA will assist those families who paid for out-of-pocket funeral expenses during the pandemic, even if they had already applied to other disaster relief programs.

Assistance is available for up to \$9,000 per individual funeral.

To be eligible for the assistance, Individuals must submit the following:

- Documentation of expenses such as receipts and contracts and must have the name of the individual requesting assistance. The total amount must be indicated in the application.
- Death certificate that has the stated cause of death resulted as COVID-19.
- Proof of funds used to pay for the expenses, including life insurance benefits and donations received.
- Must have social security numbers, dates of birth and death of the deceased individual, death information such as location, and applicant information such as physical address and email.
- The death must have occurred in the U.S. in order to be eligible for the funds.

If you lost a loved one to COVID-19 after 1/20/20, and want to learn more about this program, please use the following links:

<https://leadingage.org/regulation/fema-covid-19-funeral-assistance-program-launches-april-12>

<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq>

Hospital COVID Vaccination of Discharges to LTC Facilities

We are pleased to share that on April 4th, the NYS Department of Health (DOH) issued guidance to hospitals regarding vaccinating long term (LTC) patients before discharge to a LTC facility. This is an important step in protecting our facilities from future outbreaks.

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