



August 27, 2020

To All Staff:

**Status Update**

Each week we will provide you with updated information on COVID-testing at all of our campuses.

Testing Tracker: Summary of Employees & Residents Diagnostic Testing								
Employees	To date (since pandemic start)				New Suspected Cases			
	Employees tested	Tests Pending	Employees Positive	Employees Negative	Employees tested	Tests Pending	Employees Positive	Employees Negative
Chase	11	0	0	11	0	0	0	0
GSFH	6	0	1	5	2	0	2	0
GSVE	11	0	1*	10	0	0	0	0
			* last worked 3/29					
Residents	To date (since pandemic start)				New Suspected Cases			
	Residents tested	Tests Pending	Residents Positive	Residents Negative	Residents tested	Tests Pending	Residents Positive	Residents Negative
Chase	10	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
GSFH	22	0	0	22	3	0	2	1
GSVE	22	0	0	22	1	0	0	1
Tested as of 8/19/20					8/20/20-8/26/20			

Please note some testing was purely precautionary as the individual was asymptomatic. Ex: fall led to ER visit and tested.

Mass Testing Results from week of 8/20-8/26:

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	184	0 (but 1 staff member was tested by another employer and tested positive)	184	0
GSVE	105	1 (retest of prior positive)	104	0
Chase	97	3 (1 was retest of prior positive)	89	5

**Staff Testing**

In the last round of staff testing (8/20/20-8/26/20), we had the following positive results:

## *GSFH*

- On 8/23/20 one of our staff members who works in the ACF *tested positive for COVID-19*. The employee was tested by another employer. The employee is asymptomatic, and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents or other staff were in close contact.
- On 8/25/20 one of our staff members who works in the ACF *tested positive for COVID-19*. The employee was experiencing mild cold symptoms of dry cough, nasal congestion and mild body aches, and was tested for cause. The test was positive. They will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents were in close contact with this individual. One staff member was in close contact and is experiencing some symptoms. They will self-isolate for 14 days.
- On 8/26/20 we learned one of our staff members in the ACF *tested positive for COVID-19*. The employee had been furloughed due to close contact with a positive resident then became symptomatic (cold symptoms, sore throat) and was tested by an outside provider on 8/25/20. The test was positive. They will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents or other staff were in close contact with this individual as the staff member was furloughed and not in the building during their infectious period.

## *GSVE*

- No positive results.

## *Chase*

- Two staff members in the nursing department *tested positive for COVID-19* on 8/20/20. The employees are asymptomatic, and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - **Second floor employee:** Six staff members were in close contact, and are following all department of health instructions regarding self-quarantine. Seventeen residents were in close contact. The entire second floor was placed on droplet precautions and all second floor residents were tested for COVID. All results were negative, and they will be retested in 14 days.
  - **First floor employee:** Four staff members were in close contact, and will be following all department of health instructions regarding self-quarantine. Thirty-five residents were in close contact. The entire first floor was placed on droplet precautions and all first floor residents were tested for COVID. All results were negative, and they will be retested in 14 days.

## ***Resident Testing 8/20-8/26***

### *GSFH*

- On 8/20/20, one of our Adult Care Facility Assisted Living Program residents *tested positive for COVID-19*. The resident was sent to the hospital for an unrelated incident, and was tested as a precaution by the hospital. This test was positive. The resident is asymptomatic at this time, but will not return to GSFH until they have received a negative COVID test.
  - Eight staff members were in close contact, and will follow all department of health instructions regarding self-quarantine.
  - No other residents were in close contact with this resident. But as a precaution, the ALP residents were placed on droplet precautions.
- On 8/22/20 a second resident in our Adult Care Facility Assisted Living Program *tested positive for COVID-19*. The resident began displaying cold-like symptoms last Wednesday and was tested for COVID-19 on Friday. This test was positive.

- The resident had close contact with three employees. This contact was prolonged and in close proximity and therefore deemed at high risk, so the employees have been furloughed from work for 14 days and will self-isolate at home. No other residents were in close contact.
- The resident is currently confined to their room. The ALP residents had already been placed on droplet precautions earlier in the week. **But at this point we conducted mass testing for all ALP residents. As of today, 8/27/20, we have received the results back from all but one resident. We did have two additional residents test positive.** Both families have been notified. The residents are confined to their rooms. We are also doing additional precautions: All meals are being served on paper and all staff are wearing N95 masks at all times when on the ALP unit and adding face shields or goggles and gowns when in *any* resident room.
- As a further precaution, we have also conducted mass testing for residents on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the ACF, and results are pending.

*Chase:* No positive resident tests.

*GSVE:* No positive resident tests.

We continue to have a daily monitoring system to monitor all residents for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, as well as our daily screening for all staff.

### *GSFH ALP*

**Details are above, but it is important to note that we have four residents from GSFH's ALP unit who have tested positive for COVID-19, and there is one pending result from mass testing done as a precaution. In addition, three new staff cases on this unit were identified this week. We are focusing our energies to care for these residents, and to curtail the spread within the unit and contain it. This represents our first cases of COVID-19 positive residents at any of our facilities and we take this responsibility very seriously. We understand how worried families must be, and please know we are all here to answer your questions.**

### **NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)**

Per the DOH guidelines for mandatory testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. We are now in the week of August 26-September 1. A new week will start on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, which will run to September 2 – September 8. When scheduling or planning your appointment to be tested, please keep the week dates in mind in order to be in compliance with the Executive Order. We will keep you posted on any updates.

The testing times for each campus will be as follows:

<u>GSFH</u>		<u>GSVE</u>		<u>Chase (through 8/30)</u>		<u>Chase (effective 8/31)</u>	
Tuesday	2-4pm	Monday	2-4pm	Monday	5am-5pm	Monday	5am-8am & 1p-4p
Wednesday	7-9am	Tuesday	2-4pm	Tuesday	5am-5pm	Tuesday	5am-8am & 1p-4p
Thursday	2-4pm	Wednesday	2-4pm	Wednesday	5am-5pm	Wed	5am-8am & 1p-4p
Friday	7-9am	Friday	2-4pm				

**If you miss the weekly test, 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 weekly testing requirements, and any non-compliance among our employees can result in the facility itself being penalized. We have eliminated the earlier requirement that we receive a negative test result prior to return in recognition that testing results are now taking an extended time. **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.

## Mandation (Nursing Staff only)

We will be making a few changes to our mandate policy:

- Our policy limits the number of times a staff member can be mandated within a given seven-day period. On a temporary basis, this limit will be eliminated for GSFH ACF (ALR\EALR\ALP) staff only. We realize this will be a burden on staff, but with the recent positive COVID tests for ALP residents and staff and the resulting 14-day furloughs for employees, the units are facing unprecedented staffing challenges. We will avoid multiple mandations whenever possible and exhaust all other options before mandating, but the current times are far from normal.
- On a permanent basis, we will extend eligibility for the Critical Staffing Bonus (“pick-up bonus”) to those employees who are mandated in addition to those who volunteer to pick up critical shifts.

## COVID Related Costs

Along with the obvious challenges COVID-19 has brought to long term care facilities, there are also some direct costs that will impact our facilities. Some of these may be offset by various federal programs we are receiving, but as the situation unfolds, these costs may outweigh other funding sources. To give residents and families an idea of some of the expenditures we have incurred as of the end of July:

	Chase	GSFH	GSVE	GSC	Total
We Care differential	\$ 111,866	\$ 180,943	\$ 147,968	\$ 21,339	\$ 462,116
PPE*	\$ 44,863	\$ 127,436	\$ 79,388	\$ 1,049	\$ 252,736
Total	\$ 156,729	\$ 308,379	\$ 227,356	\$ 22,388	\$ 714,852
* Note: The PPE category includes purchases of masks, disinfectants, employee meals, iPads, sanitizers, gowns, gloves, negative air equipment rental, thermometers.					

And we are required by NYS to maintain a 60-day supply of PPE. We estimate the following additional expenses to do so in the month of August:

Chase	GSFH	GSVE	GSC	Total
\$ 148,437	\$ 181,745	\$ 107,479	\$ -	\$ 437,661

As new costs continued to multiply, we felt we could no longer dedicate dollars to the “We Care” differential. The “We Care” differential was put in place when NYS was an epicenter of the pandemic, and when many businesses were closed, potentially resulting in families experiencing cash flow issues. As the prevalence of positive COVID cases in NYS has decreased dramatically and businesses have re-opened, we eliminated this differential to conserve funding for other current COVID related expenses and potential future expenses as we move into the Fall and Winter.

We are grateful that our Board has authorized all expenditures needed to protect our residents and staff. Whether these unbudgeted expenses were a result of a government mandate such as the required 60-day supply of PPE, the dramatically increased need for PPE, or our identification of new technologies to combat COVID such as the Solaris LytBot or the UV Light Air Purification systems, our Board has fully supported all suggestions brought forward by our management team. This is new territory for all of us. As Mike Keenan, our President/CEO put it: “In all my years in long term care, I had never proposed incurring a cost without knowing how we were going to pay for it. But in the case of COVID response, the answer has to be do what we need to do to protect our residents and staff, and we will figure the rest out later.” But the costs are mounting, and we can’t ignore this.

## NYS Quarantine Travel Restrictions- UPDATE 8/25/20

The list has been revised again as of 8/25/20 (changes in italics), the advisory applies to anyone traveling from Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota,

Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and *three* territories – *Guam*, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

*Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Maryland and Montana were removed from the tri-state quarantine list Tuesday.*



**Per NYS, if you travel to a prohibited area, you cannot return without providing the results of a negative test conducted within 24 hours of your return to NYS.** GS has determined the period while you await your results is not eligible to quarantine pay and you may not use benefit time. If you do decide to travel to a restricted zone, you should carefully consider the availability of testing upon your return, and the average length of time people are waiting for their results- 5+ days unless you have access to the rapid response testing which is not widely available.

In addition, if you do become ill, NYS COVID pay is not available per NYS guidelines because you have traveled to a high risk area as defined by NYS.

**We are highly recommending for the health and welfare of our residents and staff members that you adhere to the travel restrictions.** We understand this may mean canceling vacations or missing important life events, and know how difficult these decisions can be. But 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.



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

Sincerely,

Linda Parke,  
Director of Human Resources