December 16, 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	15	0	1	14	1	1	0	0
GSFH	17	0	3	13 and 1 inconclusive	1	1	0	0
GSVE	20	0	3	17	1	1	0	0
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	14	0	0	14	0	0	0	0
GSFH	67	0	8	59	5	0	0	5
GSVE	37	0	1	36	1	0	0	1
Tested as of 12/8/20					12/9/20-12/15/20			
Please note some testing was purely precautionary as the individual was asymptomatic. Ex: fall led to ER visit and tested.								

Please note the chart above is for testing conducted for cause only. At this time, it does not include the mass staff weekly testing discussed below, resident exposure testing, or staff testing done as part of any pre-op procedures.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 12/9/20-12/15/20:

Mass Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	188	1	187	0
GSVE	151	2	149	0
Chase	108	0	106	2

Staff Testing 12/9/20-12/15/20

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

GSFH:

12/11/20

- An employee in the Rehab unit in the Skilled Nursing facility tested positive. This employee has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No residents were considered close contacts with the positive staff member. Four staff members were considered contacts of the positive employee who works in the Skilled Nursing facility but were considered to have "low level exposure" due to the PPE being used at the time of contact.

GSVE:

12/11/20

- An employee in the Skilled Nursing department tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff members or residents were in close contact.

12/13/20

- An employee in the Dietary department on the Assisted Living unit tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff members or residents were in close contact.

Chase: No new staff members tested positive.

Resident Testing 12/9/20-12/15/20

GSFH:

12/15/20

- A resident on Cameo Court tested positive for COVID-19. The resident is asymptomatic. No other residents were close contacts, and 12 staff are considered at low level risk.

Chase:

12/9/20

- Five of our residents tested positive for COVID-19, one of whom has passed away subsequent to the testing. Although there were underlying conditions, the cause of death must be listed as COVID-19. Our thoughts are with the resident's family and other loved ones. We want to reassure all of our families that we are doing everything within our power to keep your loved ones safe.
- Regarding the other residents who tested positive, no staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the personal protective equipment that is required to be worn in the facility at all times.

12/12/20

- Four of our residents tested positive for COVID19, one of whom has passed away subsequent to the testing. Our heartfelt condolences go out to this family during this very difficult time.
- Regarding the other residents who tested positive per Department of Health recommendations for contact tracing, no staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the personal protective equipment that is required to be worn in resident care areas at all times.

GSVE: No new resident positive results.

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 December 9-15. A new week will start on December 16, which will run to December 16-22. 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. The Executive Order was extending through January 1, 2021. We will keep you posted on any updates.

The testing times for each campus will be as follows next week will vary significantly due to the holiday:

GSFH		GSVE		Chase	
Tuesday	2-4pm	Monday	2-4pm	Monday	5-8am & 1-4pm
Wednesday	7-9am	Tuesday	2-4pm	Tuesday	5-8am & 1-4pm
		Wednesday	2-4pm	Wednesday	5-8am & 1-4pm

If you have any questions regarding the GSVE schedule, please contact Britnee Burnside, HR Wellness RN x6033.

If you have any questions regarding the GSFH schedule, please contact Ann Marschke, HR Wellness RN x3233.

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.

NYS Quarantine Travel Restrictions

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced new guidelines allowing out-of-state travelers to New York to "test out" of the mandatory 14-day quarantine. Travelers from states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut) that are contiguous with New York will continue to be exempt from the travel advisory. Essential workers will continue to be exempt as well. The new protocol is effective Wednesday, November 4.

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. GSC 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 me. 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.

For people outside the nursing home guidelines the following applies:

New guidelines allowing out-of-state travelers to New York to "test out" of the mandatory 14-day quarantine. Travelers from states that are contiguous with New York will continue to be exempt from the travel advisory; however, covered travelers must continue to fill out the Traveler Health Form.

For any traveler to New York State from out of state, exempting the contiguous states, the new guidelines for travelers to test-out of the mandatory 14-day quarantine are below:

- For travelers who were in another state for more than 24 hours:

  - Travelers must obtain a test within three days of departure from that state.
  - The traveler must, upon arrival in New York, quarantine for three days.
  - On day 4 of their quarantine, the traveler must obtain seek another COVID test. If both tests come back negative, the traveler may exit quarantine early upon receipt of the second negative diagnostic test.

- For travelers who were in another state for less than 24 hours:

  - The traveler does not need a test prior to their departure from the other state, and does not need to quarantine upon arrival in New York State.
  - However, the traveler must fill out the traveler information form upon entry into New York State, and take a COVID diagnostic test 4 days after their arrival in New York.

Local health departments will validate tests, if necessary, and if a test comes back positive, will issue isolation orders and initiate contact tracing. The local health department must make contact with the state the traveler came from, to ensure contact tracing proceeds there as well. All travelers must continue to fill out the traveler information form upon arrival into New York State to contribute to New York State's robust contact tracing program.

Vaccination

We continue to monitor the news on approvals for COVID-19 and the federal recommendations for prioritization. On December 4th, Gov. Cuomo announced New York will opt in to a federal vaccine distribution program for the state's nursing home residents and staff. People living and working in nursing homes and long-term care facilities will be at the top of the list to receive the first 170,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer when it arrives in New York on Dec. 15.

All Good Shepherd facilities had previously enrolled in both the federal and NYS programs to ensure we would be ready to move quickly when the vaccines received approval. This announcement by the Governor will streamline the process for us.

The federal program asked at enrollment that we select a Pharmacy to partner with, and we chose CVS. We continue to work closely with CVS on the logistics of this vaccination program:

- **SNF staff and staff with contact with SNF residents are also eligible for the program at this time. We hope this will be expanded to all staff soon, and will update staff as new info becomes available.**
- There will be no cost to staff for this vaccination.
- Once started, this process will all happen very quickly. Currently, GSFH is tentatively scheduled for 12/21, GSVE for 12/30, and Chase for 12/23. The vaccine requires two doses to be effective so second clinics will be scheduled in January to complete the process.
- **We are hoping all of our staff will elect to be vaccinated when the opportunity arises unless there are contraindications.** But this is not mandatory. To help you consider whether to consent to the vaccine, we are also attaching some generic COVID -19 Vaccination information from the CDC and from Omnicare (CVS).
- **Please let your manager know as soon as possible whether you are interested in being vaccinating or whether you prefer to decline.**
- Sign-up procedures may vary slightly between campuses so please watch for and follow all campus specific instructions.
- This is an immense undertaking in a very compressed time frame. Please help us insure the program goes smoothly.

Screening Question Reminder…….

COVID 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. Diarrhea can also be a symptom which many people might not associate with COVID. 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