



December 9, 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	14	0	1	13	1	1	0	0
GSFH	15	0	3	11 and 1 inconclusive	2	1	0	1
GSVE	18	0	3	15	2	0	0	2
Residents								
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	64	0	8	56	3	0	0	3
GSVE	36	0	1	35	1	0	0	1
Tested as of 12/1/20					12/2/20-12/8/20			
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 12/2/20-12/8/20:

Mass Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	234	1	233	0
GSVE	156	1	155	0
Chase	109	3 and 1 repeat positive	104	1

Staff Testing 12/2/20-12/8/20

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

GSFH:

12/6/20

- One of our staff members who works in administration in the Assisted Living Facility has tested positive for *COVID-19*. The 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 close contacts of the positive employee who works in the assisted living facility.
- Per NYS Department of Health guidelines, **we are required to pause our Assisted Living Facility visitation until further notice**. The assisted living facility will need to be 14-days without any new positive staff or resident cases before we are able to reopen. When this occurs, we will send out another communication alerting families and residents.

GSVE:

12/2/20

- 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 identified as being in close contact. The Skilled Nursing Department will be quarantined for precautionary measures for 14 days.
- We will be continuing the pause on our visitation due to this newest case.

Chase:

12/3/20

- Two of our staff members tested positive for COVID-19. One employee is in our activities department and one employee is in our nursing department. Both employees are symptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the PPE that is required to be worn in the facility at all times.

12/4/20

- One of our staff members in our nursing department tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is symptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the PPE that is required to be worn in resident care areas at all times.
- We will be continuing the pause on our visitation due to this newest case.

Resident Testing 12/2/20-12/8/20

GSFH: No new positive resident tests.

Chase:

12/2/20

- We received tests results regarding one of our residents who had recently passed away that they had tested positive for COVID-19 prior to their decease. Although there were underlying conditions, the cause of death must be listed as COVID-19. Our heartfelt condolences go out to this family during this very difficult time. We want to reassure all of our families that we are doing everything within our power to keep your loved ones safe and cared for.
- Another resident also tested positive that day. Fourteen staff members were considered close contacts with the resident and will self-quarantine while not working; the exposure is considered low level because of PPE that were worn during contact. No residents were in close contact. In accordance with CMS guidelines, all Skilled Nursing residents will be tested weekly for COVID-19 until there are no positive COVID-19 results for 14 days. All staff are already being tested weekly per NYS.

12/6/20

- One of our residents tested positive for COVID-19. The resident is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. 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.

12/8/20

- One of our Skilled Nursing Facility residents, who had been positive for COVID-19, passed away. The entire GSVE team is deeply saddened by this loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

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:

<u>GSFH</u>		<u>GSVE</u>		<u>Chase</u>	
Tuesday	2-4pm	Monday	2-4pm	Monday	5-8am & 1-4pm
Wednesday	7-9am	Tuesday	2-4pm	Tuesday	5-8am & 1-4pm
Thursday	2-4pm	Wednesday	2-4pm	Wednesday	5-8am & 1-4pm
Friday	7-9am	Thursday	2-4pm		

Please note GSVE will be testing on Thursday December 17 and NOT testing Friday December 18, please update your schedule accordingly.

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 be. 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 insure 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 are working closely with CVS on the logistics of this vaccination program and hope to have more detailed information soon, but in preparation:

- At this time, only Health Care residents are eligible to receive the vaccine through this program. Independent Living residents are not considered eligible as they would have the ability to go to outside clinics when they become operational. But advocacy groups such as LeadingAgeNY are pressing for expansion to IL residents if they reside on a multilevel campus (such as GSFH and GSVE). We hope to have clarification on this soon.
- **All Long Term Care staff are eligible for the program and there will be no cost to staff for this vaccination.**
- Once started, this process will all happen very quickly. We anticipate the first vaccination clinics to be held in December. The vaccine requires two doses to be effective so a second clinic will be scheduled in January to complete the process.

All staff will be receiving a letter tomorrow from Mike Keenan, our President\CEO with more information on this extremely important development in the fight against COVID-19. Please watch for this letter either via email or a mailed hard copy.

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.

A Message from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Date: December 4, 2020

Subject: With COVID-19 on the rise, stay home for safer holidays (Full message and links available at:

https://m.emailupdates.cdc.gov/rest/head/mirrorPage/@GurtRdmIJPyikZtwaGCCC3vmSENPmyFGr-YGhd56wG9efeol_0rcsMEHmqzXDi6sp9W4axUhHumVEHS123FS4W-WZFziPfyAekqT_5W8Mof7pqjN.html)



COVID-19 Is Spreading Rapidly Nationwide

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are climbing rapidly across the United States, reaching never-before-seen levels. Take immediate steps to slow the spread. Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet apart, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated places, and wash your hands often. The more steps you take, the more you are protected against COVID-19.

Prevent Getting Sick

- Three states have had more than 1 million cases since the beginning of the outbreak: California, Texas, and Florida.
- Those three states, along with Illinois and Georgia have had the most cases since the beginning of the outbreak.
- In the last 7 days, Illinois, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Florida have reported the most deaths.



Stay home for safer holidays

With COVID-19 cases on the rise, the safest way to celebrate holidays is to stay home and celebrate with the people who live with you. Although the pandemic has been stressful and isolating, getting together with family and friends who do not live with you can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. This holiday season, consider how your plans can be modified to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep your friends, families, and communities healthy.

Holiday Celebrations

More detailed CDC info on having a safe holiday available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_2067-DM43911&ACSTrackingLabel=With%20COVID-19%20on%20the%20rise%2C%20stay%20home%20for%20safer%20holidays%20%7C%20COVID-19&deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM43911



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

Sincerely,

Linda Parke
Director of Human Resources