



February 3, 2021

To All Staff:

TESTING

Each week we will provide you with updated information on COVID-19 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	20	0	4	16	0	0	0	0	0
GSFH	27	0	6	20 and 1 inconclusive	0	0	0	0	0
GSVE	25	0	5	20	0	0	0	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	19	0	2	17	0	0	0	0	0
GSFH	88	0	10	78	4	0	0	4	4
GSVE	45	0	2	45	1	0	0	1	1
Tested as of 1/26/20					1/27/21-2/2/21				
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, resident mass testing or staff testing done as part of any pre-op procedures.

Mass Resident Testing

Mass Resident Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	19	0	19	0
GSVE	19	0	19	0
Chase	9	0	5	4

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 1/27/21-2/2/21:

Mass Staff Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	137	8 repeat positives	126	3
GSVE	306	1	305	0
Chase	265	1	264	0

Staff Testing 1/27/21-2/2/21

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

GSFH

1/29/21

- An employee who works on our first floor Skilled Nursing Facility tested positive for COVID-19. This employee has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No residents or staff were considered close contacts with the positive staff member.

Chase: No new positive tests.

GSVE

2/2/21

- An employee who works in the Nursing department in skilled nursing tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff or residents were identified as close contacts.

Resident Testing 1/27/21-2/2/21: Please note the narrative below includes **all positive test results**, including results of required resident mass testing. Therefore it may not correspond with the table above, which represents only those tested for cause.

GSFH: No new positive tests.

Chase: No new positive tests.

GSVE: No new positive tests.

Resident COVID related Deaths 1/27/21-2/2/21

GSFH: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSFH.

Chase

- One of our residents who had previously tested positive but subsequently tested negative for COVID-19 passed away. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones.

GSVE: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSVE.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)

Per the DOH guidelines for mandatory twice per week testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. The new week starts today, Wednesday, February 3, which will run February 3-9. 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 Order of twice per week testing.**

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

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

If you miss the twice per week 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 twice per week 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, 2020.

Per NYS, if you travel to a prohibited area, you are required to self-quarantine. You must obtain a COVID test within 24 hours of your return to NYS. You may report to work but are required to self-quarantine when not at work. On day 4 you must obtain a second COVID test and receive negative results before exiting quarantine outside of work. 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 four of their quarantine, the traveler must obtain seek another COVID-19 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-19 diagnostic test four 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.

Furloughed Staff

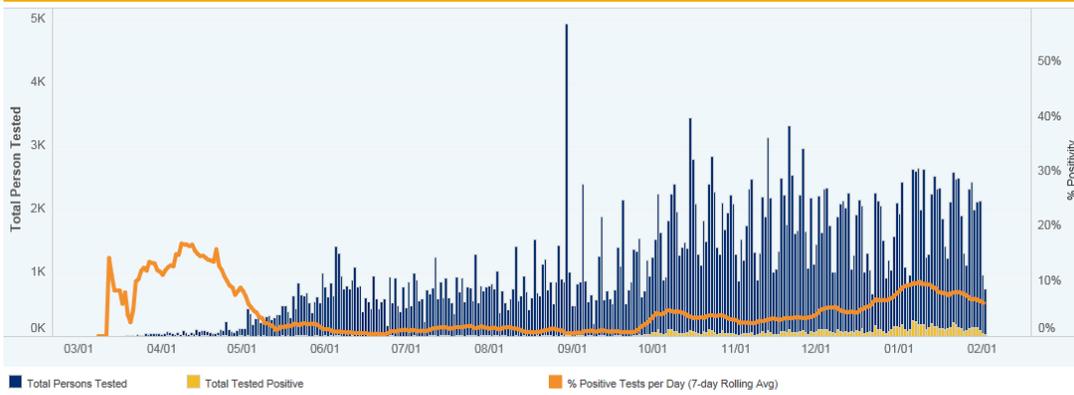
While we our facilities continue to provide quality care to all of our residents, we want to be completely transparent about some of the challenges we are facing. Each campus has had and continues to have employees who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or have had close contacts, and are therefore furloughed for a minimum of 14 days. This will obviously create staffing challenges. The following summarizes the currently furloughed staff members at each facility:

Furloughed Staff					
	Nursing	Env Service	Dietary	ACF	Other
GSFH	0	0	0	0	1
GSVE	3	1	1	1	2
Chase	2	0	0	0	1

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

NYS reports on COVID-19 Positivity Rates by County and also on COVID-19 Cluster Spots. Each week, we will include the most recent info. Increasing positivity can impact all businesses, and for nursing homes can mean increased requirements for employee testing. Per CMS guidelines:

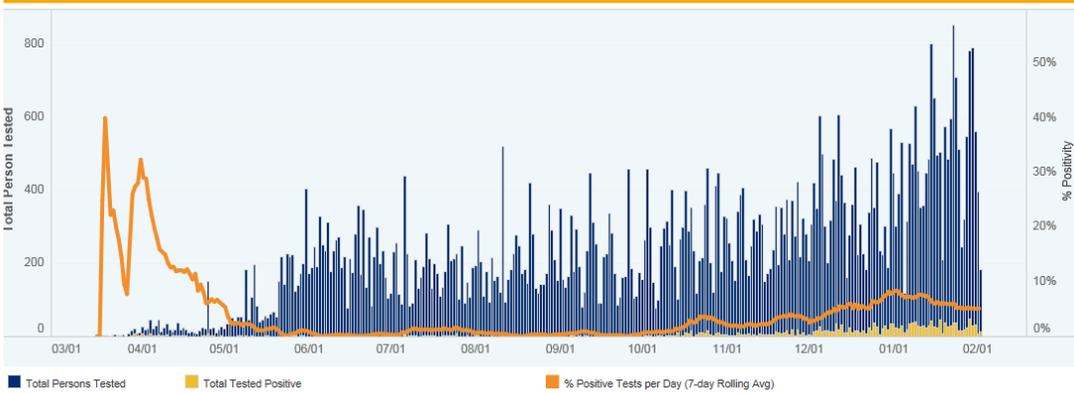
% Positive Results Over Time - Broome



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	709	37	5.2%	6.0%

% Positive Results Over Time - Chenango



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Chenango	171	14	8.2%	5.1%

Testing is also required to increase per NYS if a facility is located within a COVID-19 cluster hot spot. Currently, none of our facilities are in a COVID-19 cluster hot spot.

Vaccine News

There seems to be a lot of concerns about the vaccines in terms of safety and effectiveness. But here is some information to address this:

- Per the CDC: All the COVID-19 vaccines being used have gone through rigorous studies to ensure they are as safe as possible. Systems that allow CDC to watch for safety issues are in place across the entire country. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines that have been shown to meet rigorous safety criteria and be effective as determined by data from the manufacturers and findings from large clinical trials. Clinical trials for all vaccines must first show they meet rigorous criteria for safety and effectiveness before any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines, can be authorized or approved for use. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine.
- The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines — the only two currently approved in the U.S. — have effectiveness rates of about 95 percent after two doses. That's on par with the vaccines for chickenpox and measles.
- If anything, the 95 percent number underestimates the effectiveness, because it counts anyone who came down with a mild case of COVID-19 as a failure. But turning COVID into a typical flu — as the vaccines evidently

did for most of the remaining 5 percent — is actually a success. Of the 32,000 people who received the approved vaccines in a research trial, only one person contracted a severe COVID case.

- The vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, and the 3 others awaiting authorization for emergency use (AstraZeneca, Novavax and Johnson & Johnson) – are very promising. Of the roughly 75,000 people who have received one of the five in a research trial, not a single person has died from COVID, and only a few people appear to have been hospitalized. None have remained hospitalized 28 days after receiving a shot. Dr. Ashish Jha, the Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, was quoted in a NY Times article recently: “I don’t actually care about infections. I care about hospitalizations and deaths and long-term complications.”
- Regarding the highly contagious new virus variants that have emerged in Britain, Brazil and South Africa, the news is still good. Only the South African variant appears to make the vaccines less effective at eliminating infections. However, there is no evidence yet that this variant impacts the incidence of serious illness or death among vaccinated people.

Super Bowl Celebrations: CDC Recommendations

Safer Ways to Enjoy the Super Bowl

Gathering virtually or with the people you live with is the safest way to celebrate the Super Bowl this year. If you do have a small gathering with people who don't live with you, outdoors is safer than indoors. This year, choose a safer way to enjoy the game.

Host a virtual Super Bowl watch party.

- Wear clothing or decorate your home with your favorite team's logo or colors.
- Make appetizers or snacks with the people you live with to enjoy while watching the game and share the recipes with your friends and family.
- Start a text group with other fans to chat about the game while watching.

Attend an outdoor viewing party where viewers can sit 6 feet apart.

- Use a projector screen to broadcast the game.
- Sit at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.



If you choose to attend the Super Bowl or a large Super Bowl event, like a watch party, follow these steps to make yourself safer:

- Call the venue to ensure that they have steps in place to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Follow signage at the venue to allow for social distancing.
- Arrive to the venue early to avoid crowding and congested areas.

Media Coverage of Nursing Homes

We know there has been increasingly negative media coverage of Nursing Homes and the response to COVID-19. While we will not address the political aspects or speak for any other facilities, we want to assure you that at all the Good Shepherd Communities facilities, the safety and health of our residents and staff have always been the highest priority for our Board of Directors, management team and all our staff. We have made significant capital investments (ex: Lytbots), purchased all required Personal Protective Equipment, tested per NYS guidelines, held vaccination clinics for residents and staff, introduced the “We Care” differential last year, and created wage incentives for COVID positive units. While staffing has been challenging at times due to the difficulty in recruiting staff to Long Term Care in the midst of a

pandemic and the impact of furloughed employees, we have also expanded our use of agency personnel, and contracted with travel agencies from out of the area per NYS Department of Health recommendation. Our staff have risen to the occasion at all of our facilities, and performed heroically under very stressful conditions. Thank you to all of you for your sacrifices to protect our residents and each other.

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. 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