



January 20, 2021

To All Staff:

Status Update

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

TESTING

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	19	0	3	16	1 tested offsite	0	1	0
GSFH	26	0	6	19 and 1 inconclusive	1	0	0	1
GSVE	24	0	5	19	0	0	0	0
1/13/21 note the 3 'employees for cause' are actually one person who travels b/w campuses								
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	Residents Negative
Chase	18	0	2	16	1	0	0	1
GSFH	81	0	9	72	3	0	1	2
GSVE	43	0	1	42	1 tested offsite	0	1	0
Tested as of 12/29/20					1/13/21-1/19/21			
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	33	0	33	0
GSVE	18	0	18	0
Chase	36	11 repeats	8	17

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 1/13/21-1/19/21:

Mass Staff Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	306	3 repeat	302	1
GSVE	216	2 and 2 repeats	212	0
Chase	122	5 and 11 repeats	106	0

Staff Testing 1/13/21-1/19/21

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

GSFH: No new staff tested positive for COVID.

Chase

1/12/21

- One of our employees in the Nursing department received a positive test result from an outside provider. No other staff or residents are considered close contacts due to the PPE staff are wearing while in the facility. The staff member will self-isolate for the required period.

1/14/21

- Four members of the Nursing team tested positive. All are symptomatic. None of these individuals is considered a close contact with any other staff or residents due to PPE in use, and all will self-isolate.

1/15/21

- A clinical staff person who travels between our campuses tested positive. This individual is asymptomatic. There are no close contact with any other staff or residents due to PPE in use, and the individual will self-isolate.

GSVE:

1/18/21

- An employee who works in our Skilled Nursing Facility in the Nursing department has tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. There was one staff contact identified, they will self-quarantine while not at work. There was one resident contact identified, the resident is on full transmission based precautions.
- An employee in the Dietary department in tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff members or residents were in close contact.

Resident Testing 1/13/21-1/19/21: 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: 33 mass tests performed with no new positive resident results.

1/17/21

- One of our residents on our Rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19. This resident has mild symptoms and will be on isolation for 14 days. Contact tracing revealed there were five staff members considered close contacts. The employees have been furloughed and will self-isolate for the required period. No other residents were close contacts.

Chase: No new resident positive test results.

Resident mass testing at Chase: 36 tested, 0 new positives, 11 repeats, 17 pending and 8 negatives.

GSVE:

1/18/21

- A resident in Independent Living tested positive for COVID-19. The resident is currently hospitalized. The exposure did not occur on-site. Two family members were close contacts, and are self-isolating. No other residents or staff members are considered close contacts.

18 mass tests performed: all negative

Resident COVID related Deaths 1/13/21-1/19/21

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

Chase

- Four of our residents who had previously tested positive 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.

Vaccination

- **Staff**
 - ALL staff regardless of department are eligible for the program, with prioritization based on risk. These clinics have begun at all the Campuses.
- There will be no cost to employees for this vaccination.

- 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. Currently, the percentage of employees electing to receive the vaccine has been disappointing. We are including some information from the CDC regarding the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.**
- **SNF**
 - At this point, all three of our campuses have had their first vaccine clinic for all SNF residents, and as of today, all will have their second vaccine clinic.
- **ACF:**
 - GSVE ALR clinic dates: 1/14, 2/4, 2/25
 - GSFH ALR Clinic Dates: 1/13, 2/3, 2/24
- **Independent Living**
 - **We are very excited to announce our LTC pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe will be holding clinics over the next few weeks for our IL residents.**
 - GSFH: Friday 1/22/21. All apartment residents who elect to receive the vaccine will be scheduled.
 - GSVE: Monday 1/25/21. 60 appointments are available and will be scheduled in alphabetic order. A second clinic will be scheduled within the next few weeks as more vaccine becomes available.
 - While there is no cost for the vaccine, we will be gathering all the required paperwork in advance to expedite the day of the clinic, including driver's license, and Medicare cards for each resident. And please remember the vaccine requires two doses 3-4 weeks apart.
 - NYS residents over 65 are also eligible to be vaccinated at other sites. To explore eligibility, available sites and learn how to schedule an appointment, access this link: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff (Reminder)

Per the DOH guidelines for mandatory twice per week testing, the week runs from **Wednesday-Tuesday**. We are now in the week of 1/13/2021-1/20/2021. A new week will start on Wednesday, January 20, which will run to January 20-26. 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.

Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is imperative that proper PPE is worn at all times, especially when on the floor caring for residents or in resident care areas. Recently, we had a situation where proper PPE was not being utilized and we had to furlough 5 CNAs. Not wearing proper PPE is strictly against GSs policies and procedures, endangers our staff and residents and will NOT be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

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 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 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.

COVID Positive Unit Differential

When the Board authorizes a targeted differential to recognize those employees who are working on a unit with COVID positive residents this differential will be \$2\hour, which is for the time spent on a unit with COVID positive residents. The differential is in effect for 14 days from the last positive resident.

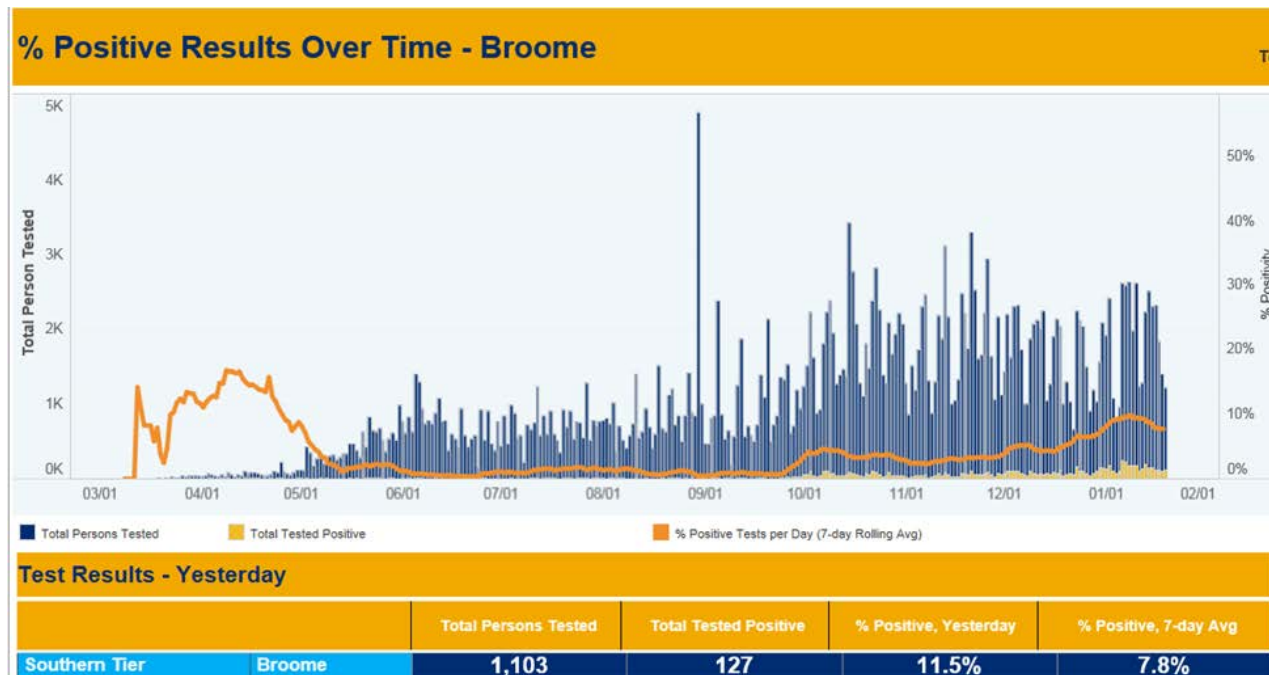
Furloughed Staff

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:

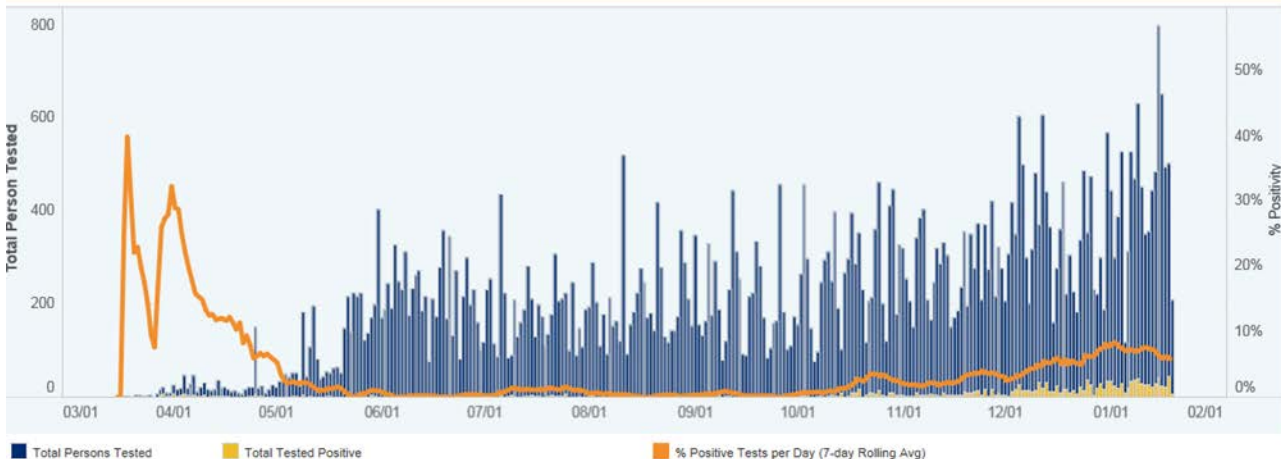
Furloughed Staff					
	Nursing	Env Servic	Dietary	ACF	Other
GSFH	5	0	0	0	0
GSVE	1	0	1	0	0
Chase	12	2	0	0	1

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

NYS reports on COVID Positivity Rates by County and also on COVID 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 - Chenango



Test Results - Yesterday

	Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier				
Chenango	202	8	4.0%	5.9%

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

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

Answering Common Questions About COVID-19 Vaccines

Based on [recommendations](#) from the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#), an independent panel of medical and public health experts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that both healthcare personnel (HCP) and residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs) be included among those offered the first supply of COVID-19 vaccines.

You are on the front lines and risk being exposed to COVID-19 each day on the job. Early vaccination can protect not only you from getting sick, but also help protect residents and your family members who may have underlying health conditions that put them at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Q. Why is it important that LTCF staff receives COVID-19 vaccine, even if LTCF residents are vaccinated?

Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to prevent getting sick with COVID-19 disease. HCP, including LTCF staff, were placed first in line to receive COVID-19 vaccine because of their essential role in fighting this deadly pandemic **and** their increased risk of getting COVID-19 and spreading it to their patients.

The decision to get vaccinated protects more than just your health. It can also help protect your colleagues, facility residents, families, and communities.

Q. Will I still need to wear masks, gowns, or personal protective equipment in the facility after receiving COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic. However, staff members who have been vaccinated should continue to follow all [current guidance](#) to protect themselves and others, including proper use of [personal protective equipment](#). Because we need to use all the prevention tools available, you should continue to cover your nose and mouth with a [mask](#) when around others, avoid [close contact](#) with people who are sick, [stay 6 feet away from others](#), avoid crowds, and [clean your hands](#) often.

The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to [protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Q. Are COVID-19 vaccines being held to the same safety standards as other vaccines in the United States?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety standards as all other vaccines. Several expert and independent groups evaluate the safety of vaccines being given to people in the United States. After a review of all the available information, CDC and [ACIP](#) agree that the lifesaving benefits of vaccinating LTCF residents against COVID-19 outweigh the possible risks.

Q. Can I feel confident that COVID-19 vaccines are safe?

Yes. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety standards as all other vaccines. All COVID-19 vaccines being administered to LTCF staff and residents were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA will keep monitoring the vaccines to look for safety issues after they are authorized and in use.

Q. Will I experience side effects after I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

There may be side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccination, but they should go away within a few days. Possible side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This does not mean you have COVID-19. Side effects are signs that the vaccine is working to build immunity. Call your healthcare provider if they don't go away in a week or you have more serious symptoms.

For LTCFs CDC will work with pharmacies and other partners to report possible side effects (called "adverse events") to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). You and your coworkers are also encouraged to report any adverse events immediately.

After receiving the vaccine, staff is encouraged to [enroll in v-safe](#). This is a smartphone tool you can use to tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. If you report serious side effects, someone from CDC will call to follow up.

Q. Should I be concerned about side effects that may develop following COVID-19 vaccination, and will I need to miss work?

It can be hard to tell the difference between side effects from the vaccine and symptoms that you could have if you were infected with COVID-19. Your side effects from the vaccine could be mistaken for having COVID-19. So, it will be important to know the difference between the symptoms:

Symptoms that **CAN** occur after either COVID-19 **vaccination or infection** include:

- Fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscles aches, and joint pain

Symptoms **NOT** likely to be from the COVID-19 vaccination (and you should look out for) include:

- Cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. These are not the typical symptoms from a COVID-19 vaccination. They could be symptoms of COVID-19 or another infection.

Talk to your facility leadership about staying home from work.

Your facility administrator and clinical leadership should have [a plan for helping staff manage symptoms](#) that may occur after receiving COVID-19 vaccination.

Q. What happens if multiple staff members are out at the same time because of side effects after COVID-19 vaccination?

We understand your concerns about potential workforce shortages resulting from vaccine side effects. LTCF administrators may consider staggered administration, so that not all staff members are vaccinated on the same day. For example, facilities may have half of the staff vaccinated at the first on-site federal [Pharmacy Partnership for LTC Program](#) clinic day and the other half vaccinated at a second on-site clinic day or in the community at health department clinics run according to your jurisdiction's plan to vaccinate HCP. LTCF staff members who are not present for any on-site vaccination clinics are encouraged to get vaccinated at another location in the community. There will be no cost associated with COVID-19 vaccine for recipients, no matter where you get vaccinated.

Q. What if I receive the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine at my facility's on-site clinic, but then miss the clinic for the second dose? How do I finish the vaccine series?

Two shots are needed to provide the best protection against COVID-19, and the shots are given a few weeks apart. The first shot starts building protection, but people need a second shot a few weeks later to get the most protection the vaccine can offer.

Every person who receives a COVID-19 vaccine will also receive a vaccination record card that indicates the date the first dose was administered and which vaccine they received. If you receive the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine at your LTCF but are not there to receive the second dose, you may bring the vaccination record card to another provider in your area to complete the vaccine series. Your facility may also work with pharmacy partners to arrange for staff to be at the facility during future clinics, but this will vary across facilities.

