



March 10, 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	22	0	4	18	1	0	0	1
GSFH	30	0	8	21 and 1 inconclusive	0	0	0	0
GSVE	25	0	5	20	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	Residents Negative
Chase	25	0	2	23	10	0	0	10
GSFH	119	0	12	107	5	0	0	5
GSVE	53	0	2	51	5	0	0	5
Tested as of 3/2/21				3/3/21-3/9/21				
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 Testing

Mass Resident Testing

Mass Resident Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	0	0	0	0
GSVE	0	0	0	0
Chase	0	0	0	0

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 3/3/21-3/9/21:

Mass Staff Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	319	0	319	0
GSVE	275	0	274	1
Chase	134	1 repeat	104	29

Staff Testing 3/3/21-3/9/21

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

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results

GSVE: No new positive test results

Resident Testing 3/3/21-3/9/21: 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 test results

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 3/3/21-3/9/21

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

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

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

Vaccination

- **SNF and ACF**
 - At this point, all three of our campuses have had their first and second vaccine clinics for staff and residents. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE), NYS through the local health department will supply vaccines for new residents, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines. Chenango County (Chase) should be added to this program in the coming weeks.
- **Independent Living**
 - **The Medicine Shoppe, our Long Term Care Pharmacy has offered clinics for our IL residents.**
 - GSFH: Friday 1/22/21. All apartment residents who elected to receive the vaccine received the vaccine.
 - GSVE: **Great news: The second round of vaccines was administered last Friday (2/26/21)**, and an additional 27 IL residents received their first dose. Their next dose will be scheduled in four weeks. There is no cost for the vaccine.
 - NYS residents over 65 or with certain underlying conditions 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/>

- **Staff**
 - The federal program which supplied vaccines for staff is ending, and we are transitioning into a new phase of the staff vaccination program. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE), NYS through the local health department will supply vaccines for new staff or staff who had previously declined the vaccine, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines. Chenango County (Chase) should be added to this program in the coming weeks.
 - We continue to educate our employees on the vaccines effectiveness and safety record, and to advocate for our employees to help protect themselves and our residents by being vaccinated. 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.**

New CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People (More Reasons to Get Vaccinated!!!)

This is the first set of public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people. This guidance will be updated and expanded based on the level of community spread of COVID, the proportion of the population that is fully vaccinated, and the rapidly evolving science on COVID-19 vaccines.

For the purposes of this guidance, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).¹

The following recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- **Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic**

For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:

- Take precautions in public like wearing a well-fitted mask and physical distancing
- Wear masks, practice physical distancing, and adhere to other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people who are at [increased risk for severe COVID-19](#) disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease
- Wear masks, maintain physical distance, and practice other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households
- Avoid medium- and large-sized in-person gatherings
- Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- Follow guidance issued by individual employers
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations (unchanged at this time)



We are encouraged by this new guidance for non-health care settings, and hope to see the CDC relax visitation restrictions for vaccinated individuals in a similar manner.

NYS Increases Indoor Dining Capacity Starting March 19 (outside of NYC)

Restaurants outside of NYC can increase indoor dining capacity to 75%

On March 7, Governor Cuomo announced that all restaurants outside of New York City can increase indoor dining capacity to 75% on March 19. All guidance from the Phase 3 Indoor Dining guidelines still apply, including 6 feet spacing. As a reminder, barriers of 5 ft. in height may be used in place of the distancing, which could help restaurants reach 75% capacity. Good Shepherd is reviewing this new guidance to determine how best to expand our dining venue's capacity.

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, March 10, which will run March 10-16. 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: **Please note Effective March 17, 2021, GSFH will not be testing on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4pm.**

GSFH

Tuesday 2-4pm
 Wednesday 7-9am
 Thursday 2-4pm
 Friday 7-9am

GSVE

Monday 2-4pm
 Tuesday 2-4pm
 Wednesday 2-4pm
 Friday 2-4pm

Chase

Monday 6-8am & 1-4pm
 Thursday 6-8am & 1-4pm

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.

In addition, if you had a positive test result within the last 90 days, for GSVE, GSFH, and GSC please contact the HR Wellness RN, and for Chase please contact the DON, to make arrangements to get a rapid antigen test. This is the manner in which you will be tested for the next 90 days.

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 guidelines in November 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.

Per NYS, asymptomatic Health Care Professionals returning from travel to a non-contiguous state or a country or territory subject to a CDC Level 2 or higher COVID-19 risk assessment level or for which the COVID-19 risk level is designated by the CDC as unknown may return to work consistent with the essential worker requirements set forth in the Department’s travel advisory, however such Health Care Professionals shall receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19 within 24 hours of arrival in New York and again on the fourth day after their return.

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 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.

Aegis Lab (Reminder)

Aegis Lab is an independent laboratory that performs our weekly COVID-19 diagnostic testing. The sample swab is submitted to Aegis Lab along with your insurance information. Unfortunately, it has been brought to our attention that Excellus, and perhaps other insurance carriers are mailing the check to the individual instead of paying Aegis directly for the testing services provided. You should receive a letter from Aegis Lab indicating that these funds belong to Aegis and must be remitted to them immediately. Therefore, you must deposit the check that you received from your insurance carrier and make a payment at: <https://aegis.synergypay.com>, to avoid further actions. . If you don’t receive a letter from Aegis, but you did receive a check from your insurance carrier, please call Aegis at 833-230-4420. Aegis will be tracking payments against their list of those impacted.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but the situation was not under ours or Aegis’ control.

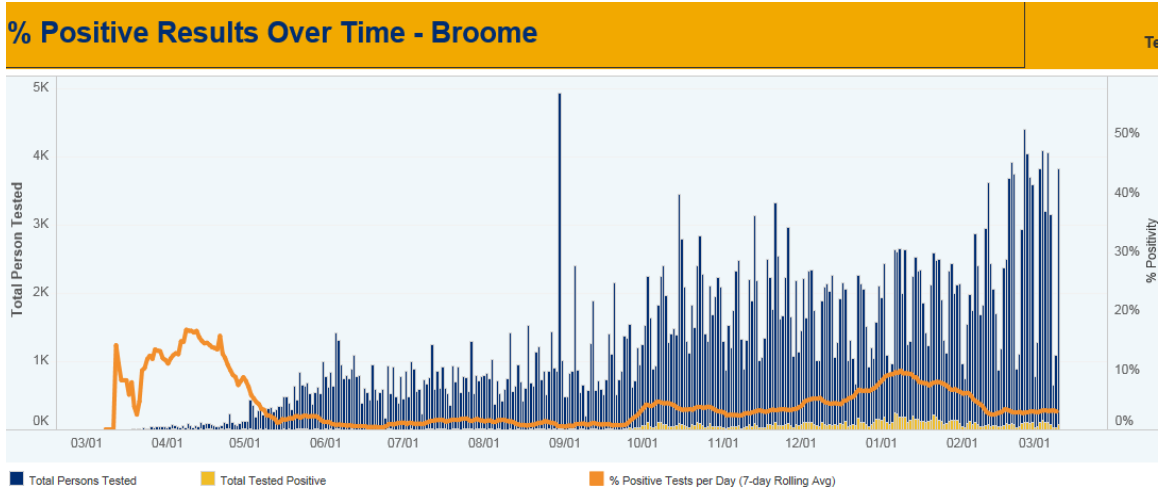
Furloughed Staff

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:

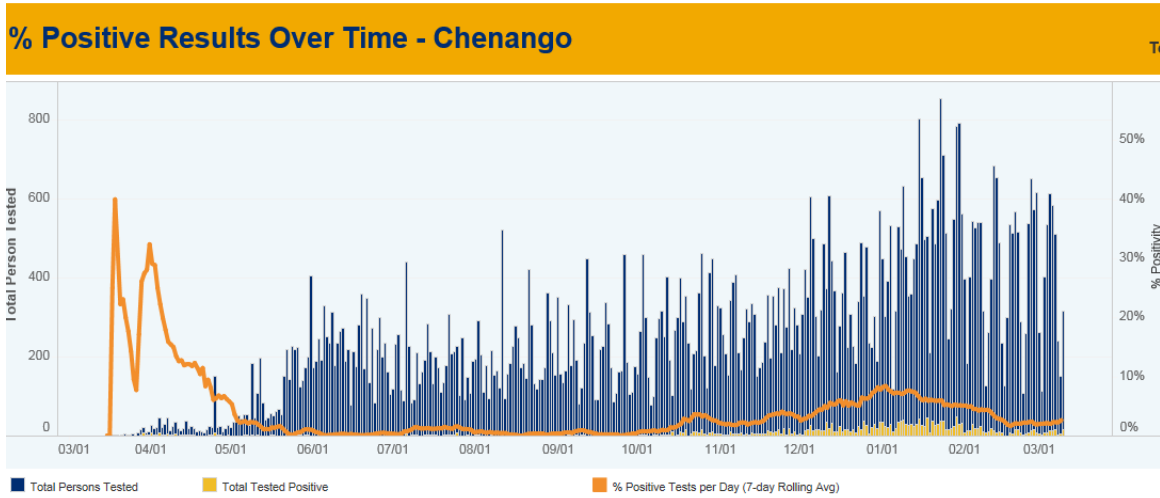
Furloughed Staff					
	Nursing	Env Servic	Dietary	ACF	Other
GSFH	0	0	0	0	0
GSVE	0	0	0	0	0
Chase	0	0	0	0	0

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:



Test Results - Yesterday		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	3,741	84	2.2%	3.0%



Test Results - Yesterday		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Chenango	300	17	5.7%	2.6%

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-19. 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