



October 29, 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	11	0	0	11	1	0	0	1	
GSFH	12	0	3	9	0	0	0	0	
GSVE	17	0	2	15	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	10	0	0	10	3	1	0	2	
GSFH	37	0	7	30	4	0	1	3	
GSVE	29	0	0	29	1	0	0	1	
Tested as of 10/21/20				10/22/20-10/28/20					

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. At GSFH there was an additional resident who tested positive as a result of mass testing not reflected above.

**NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 10/22/20-10/28/20:**

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	237	6 ( 2 are repeat)	231	0
GSVE	163	0	163	0
Chase	115	0	115	0

**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 October 28-November 3. A new week will start on November 4, which will run to November 4-10. 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 November 3, 2020. 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	Friday	2-4pm		

**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.

### **Aegis Lab Employee Test Results**

As a reminder, when you are COVID tested through GS, you should be receiving the pink copy of your Laboratory Request Form. On this form is your requisition number (bottom left corner), which allows you to obtain the results of your test. This can be completed by going to <https://patientportal.aegislabs.com>, enter your requisition number, and some personal data. If your swab specimen has been processed at the lab you should have your results. It will also inform you if it hasn't been processed yet, and ask you to check back later.

### **Staff Testing 10/25/20-10/28/20**

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

#### *GSFH*

10/22/20

- One of our clerical staff members in our skilled nursing facility tested positive for COVID-19. There are no residents or staff who were considered close contacts.

10/23/20

- One of our clinical staff members in our skilled nursing facility has also tested positive for COVID-19 after surveillance testing. This staff member is experiencing mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. There are no residents or staff members who were considered close contacts.
- One of our employees that works on the East Wing first floor in the office area has tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is symptomatic, and will self-isolate for 14 days. We have confirmed the staff member did not have close contact with any other staff member or resident.

10/28/20

- One of our clinical staff members in our skilled nursing facility has also tested positive for COVID-19. This staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. There were no close contacts.

*GSVE*: No new positive staff results.

*Chase*: No new positive staff results.

### ***Resident Testing 10/22-10/28***

*GSFH*

10/22/20

- One of our skilled nursing facility residents on our Rehab unit, who was positive for COVID 19, passed away. Although there were underlying conditions, the cause of death is considered to be COVID-19. Our heartfelt condolences go out to this family during this very difficult time. We want to reassure all families that we are doing everything within our power to keep your loved ones safe and cared for. Our commitment to our seniors who are here at GSFH is the same as our commitment to our own families. This loss has been felt by all of our staff and providers.

10/23/20

- One of our residents on the Rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19 after exhibiting mild symptoms. All positive residents are on isolation for 14 days. No residents or staff members are considered close contacts as all staff were wearing full PPE according to CDC recommendations.
- Although we are not required by the NYS DOH, at this point, we instituted more restricted admissions requirements and will be adopting new testing protocols.

10/28/20

- One of our residents on the Rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19. This resident has mild symptoms. All positive residents are on isolation for 14 days. There are no residents who were considered close contacts to the positive resident or the positive staff member.

*Chase*: No positive resident tests.

*GSVE*: No positive resident tests.

We continue to have a daily monitoring system to monitor all residents for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, as well as our daily screening for all staff.

### **NYS Quarantine Travel Restrictions**

The list has been revised again as of 10/27/2020 (changes in italics), the advisory applies to anyone traveling from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, *California*, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and two territories – Guam and Puerto Rico. No states were removed from the list. Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania meet the criteria, but given their proximity in the region Cuomo says a quarantine is not viable. He discourages non-essential travel to those states.

**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.

**Employee testing and Resident COVID testing- what tests are we using?**

We use different tests in different circumstances, and are compliant with all NYS and CMS directives pertaining to COVID testing.

Staff Mass Testing: We use a Real Time RT-PCR test (Real Time Reverse-Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction). Results usually are returned within 2 days. While we understand this time lapse raises some concerns, this test is more accurate and reliable than others, especially when testing asymptomatic people. This means fewer false positives resulting in furloughing healthy staff and fewer false negatives resulting in infectious personnel working. Until very recently, there was no federal or NYS guidance on using rapid results testing for mass testing (surveillance testing) in the LTC setting so most facilities were not utilizing the rapid result testing (more below).

Staff Testing for Cause: Staff being tested for cause are following the directions of their health care provider in the community or accessing public testing sites so the testing methods may vary.

Resident Mass Testing: We use the same Real Time RT-PCR test (Real Time Reverse-Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction) as we do for mass staff testing for much the same reasons.

Resident for Cause: In many cases, the health care provider will order Rapid Result Point of Care Antigen Testing to insure a quicker turnaround time when testing symptomatic residents for cause. In these circumstances, these tests perform better than they do in mass testing.

POC Antigen Testing (“Rapid Results Testing”): Until very recently, there was no federal or NYS guidance on using rapid results testing for mass testing (surveillance testing) in the LTC setting. But over the past few weeks, both CMS and NYS have issued more detailed guidance which is being reviewed by LeadingAgeNY. These guidance’s look at a number of variables to determine when to utilize these tests, when confirmatory RT-PCR tests would be required, and the implications for quarantining and isolation. As we learn more we may revise our internal practices to expand the use of this type of testing in certain circumstances.

**COVID Positive Unit Differential**

Once again, the Board has authorized a targeted differential to recognize those employees who are working on a unit with COVID positive residents. This differential will be \$2\hour, for time spent on a unit with COVID Positive residents. This is to recognize the dedication involved in rising to the challenge to care for these residents.



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

Sincerely,

Linda Parke  
Director of Human Resources