



December 9, 2020



To All Families of our Skilled Nursing and Adult Care Residents:

**“WELCOME” TO OUR NEW FAMILY CONTACTS**

We are required to notify all residents, families and staff of a facility whenever we have a positive COVID test result for any staff member or resident. While CMS requires this notice be made by 5 pm of the next day, NYS is more stringent, requiring notice within 24 hours. Two points of contact are required.

To help us meet these requirements, we have utilized a broadcast tool (School Messenger) to send emails and automated phone calls to up to two email addresses and two phone numbers per resident or resident contact, which is usually the first Health Care Proxy. The system then broadcasts to all the contact phone numbers and emails in this database. We also use this system to send out this weekly update letter to our resident family contacts.

**You will also receive a broadcast when we have a staff member or resident test positive for COVID-19.** This includes an email *and a phone call*. We understand these phone calls can come at inconvenient times and would like to offer you the option to opt out of the phone calls for one or both of the numbers on file *so long as we have an email address on file to receive the alert*. This opt out will only effect the notification databases used by School Messenger. All contact info will remain on file in our Electronic Health Record, PointClickCare.

If you wish to opt out of alerts for one or both phone numbers we have file, please email me at [pm@goodshepherdcommunities.org](mailto:pm@goodshepherdcommunities.org) with the specifics. Please note it will take time to make the changes to the databases, so dependent on volume, there may be a delay from the time you make the request and the time the database revisions are completed. Thank you in advance for your patience.

**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	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	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 11/25/20-12/1/20:**

**Mass Testing**

<b>Mass Employee Testing</b>				
	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. 4 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.

*GSVE*

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.

### **Salon Service**

Good Shepherd Fairview Home directly employees their beauticians and has been allowed to provide services on the units with some restrictions depending on the level of care. The week after Thanksgiving, they will be expanding this.

At Good Shepherd Village at Endwell, salon services continue in ALR and IL, but not in SNF.

At Chase, we have not yet been able to resume salon services.

### **Vaccination**

We continue to monitor the news on approvals for COVID-19 and the federal recommendations for prioritization.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 ensure 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, and there is a possibility IL residents in a CCRC setting such as GSVE will be deemed eligible.
- All Long Term Care staff are also eligible for the program.
- Residents will receive the vaccinations in their rooms. There will be no cost to the resident or families 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.
- Families of residents in Health Care will be asked to sign consent forms. While we do not have the actual forms yet (which are in triplicate), we are attaching a copy of what the form will look like. We will distribute the actual consent forms as soon as possible. Please help us by returning your consent forms as quickly as possible.
- We are hoping all of our residents will elect to be vaccinated unless there are contraindications. But this is not mandatory for our residents. To help you consider whether to consent to the vaccine, we are also attaching some generic COVID -19 Vaccination information from the Society for Post-Acute and Long Term Care Medicine. You can also review recent news releases and articles specific to the Pfizer vaccine to better understand the specifics.

**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](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](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)

## NYS DOH Guidance on Residents Leaving the Facility for Holiday Visits

On November 24, 2020, NYS issued guidance on this topic. While there are still some unknowns which we are clarifying, the requirements are serious and their impact should be carefully evaluated when making plans for the holidays.

- Residents who leave a facility must:
  - Quarantine or minimize contact to the extent safely possible prior to their return to the facility.
  - **Be quarantined on transmission-based precautions upon return to the facility for 14 days.**
  - **Test negative immediately (within 24 hours) prior** to return to the facility.
  - **Be tested at least three times** during the 14-day quarantine period at the facility, including on the first day (upon return) and the last day that a resident must be quarantined.
  - Residents who leave and a family or friend must attest in writing that they:
    - Are aware of the risks involved with taking the resident out of the facility;
    - Will follow masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene practices pursuant to CDC and DOH directives;
    - Will notify the facility if the resident becomes ill within one week of leaving the facility;

- Will notify the facility if anyone with whom the resident socialized tests positive for COVID-19 or influenza or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 and influenza within 14 days of the resident's return to the facility;
- Will communicate with the facility about a return date for the resident to the facility in accordance with the facility's policy; and
- Will quarantine or minimize contact (or assist the resident to do so) to the extent safely possible prior to return to a nursing home.

Please consider these requirements carefully in considering bringing your loved one out of the facility for a visit, particularly the requirement for a 14 day quarantine upon return and the impact of this on your loved one.

**FAQs:** We receive multiple individual emails or calls with questions. Rather than respond individually to multiple individuals asking the same or similar questions, we have added a FAQs section each week. Please note we have an obligation to maintain the privacy of the health information of our employees and cannot provide information which could potentially identify them.

*Q: Which of our facilities and level of care currently allow visitors?*

A: Currently, Good Shepherd Village at Endwell Assisted Living (ALR, SNALR, and EALR) and Good Shepherd Fairview Home SNF are open for visitation.

Chase Memorial Nursing Home, Good Shepherd Fairview Home ACF (ALR, EALR, and ALP) and Good Shepherd Village at Endwell SNF are required to pause visitation due to recent positive COVID test results.

Because the hours available and locations vary by facility and level of care, we are issuing facility\level of care specific broadcasts to the impacted families with more specific information.

Also please note that a single positive COVID test at a facility\level of care will result in the Department of Health suspending visitation for another 14 days. COVID prevalence is increasing in NYS. In the event that we must suspend visitation, we will notify any visitors scheduled individually, and then issue a broadcast with more general information.

Please remember the NYS DOH guidelines for visitation for ACFs and SNFs are different in many ways, including how many people can visit at a time and the SNF requirement that visitors present verified negative COVID test results within the last week prior to the visit. If you are concerned about this requirement and the burdens it presents, please reach out to the Governor's office at 1-518-474-8390 to voice your concerns.

**Please remember that NYS DOH has very strict guidelines on how we structure our visitations. Social distancing is absolutely required. If visitors do not comply with these guidelines, the visitor will be asked to leave and may not be allowed to return depending on the nature of the violation. These guidelines are for the protection of our residents, and we ask everyone to comply.**

We continue to offer virtual visits, and can arrange for window visits. Both should be scheduled through the Therapeutic Recreation department.

## **Donations**

Thank you to the following individuals or groups for their generous donations to support of our staff and residents:

- The Hildebrant family provided Italian Christmas cookies to all the staff on GSFH's Cameo Court.
- Cookies and brittle for ALR staff from the family of Edna Gene Stagnitto

Please remember to contact the facility's Administrator prior to making a donation so they are aware and they can review any restrictions.



Please visit our website for ongoing coverage of our response to COVID.

Thank you all for your patience during this difficult time. If you are feeling unusually high levels of stress, there are a number of resources available.

- Office of Mental Health Emotional Support Helpline: 1-844-863-9314\*  
The Emotional Support Helpline provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Helpline is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling.
- CDC Resources : <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

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