



February 10, 2021



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

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID. THIS IS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS TOPIC.

“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 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					Residents				
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	1	0	1	0	0
GSVE	25	0	5	20	0	0	0	0	0
Residents					New Suspected Cases				
	Residents tested	Tests Pending	Residents Positive	Residents Negative	Residents tested	Tests Pending	Residents Positive	Residents Negative	
Chase	19	0	2	17	1	0	0	0	1
GSFH	92	0	10	82	4	0	1	3	3
GSVE	46	0	2	46	2	0	0	0	2
Tested as of 2/2/20					2/3/21-2/9/21				
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 Resident Testing

Mass Resident Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	21	0	21	0
GSVE	21	0	21	0
Chase	8	1	7	0

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 2/3/21-2/9/21:

Mass Staff Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	313	1 and 1 repeat	311	0
GSVE	199	0	199	0
Chase	167	1 positive and 3 repeats	161	2

Staff Testing 2/3/21-2/9/21

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

GSFH

2/6/21

- One of our staff members tested positive for COVID-19. This employee works in the Skilled Nursing Facility in the Therapy department. This employee is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. Two residents on our Rehab unit were considered close contacts, and three residents in our Assisted Living Facility were also considered close contacts of the employee who works in the Skilled Nursing Facility.

Chase:

2/3/21

- One of our employees in our Therapy department positive for COVID-19 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: No new positive tests.

Resident Testing 2/3/21-2/9/21: 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:

2/7/21

- One of our residents on our Rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19. This resident is symptomatic will be on isolation for 14 days.

Chase:

2/3/21

- One of our residents tested positive for COVID-19. 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: No new positive tests.

Resident COVID related Deaths 2/3/21-2/9/21

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

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

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

Vaccination

- **SNF**
 - At this point, all three of our campuses have had their first and second vaccine clinics for all SNF residents.
- **ACF:**
 - GSVE ALR clinic dates: 1/14, 2/4, 2/25
 - GSFH ALR Clinic Dates: 1/13, 2/3, 2/24
- **Independent Living**
 - **The Medicine Shoppe, our Long Term Care Pharmacy has begun to hold for our IL residents.**
 - GSFH: Friday 1/22/21. All apartment residents who elected to receive the vaccine received the vaccine.
 - GSVE: Monday 1/25/21. 71 appointments were available and were scheduled in alphabetic order. A second clinic will be scheduled within the next few weeks as more vaccine becomes available. We understand IL residents are anxious for the second clinic, and we will schedule it as soon as the Medicine Shoppe informs us they have received additional vaccine doses.
 - 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 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**
 - 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.**

NYS Mandated Staff Testing

Per NYS, full-time staff are required to be tested twice per week for COVID-19, and those who do not meet the hours requirement must be tested once per week. As the positivity rate in NYS and in our area declines, we anticipate this being reduced to once per week.

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 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	1	0	2	0	1
GSVE	2	0	1	0	1
Chase	1	0	0	0	1

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

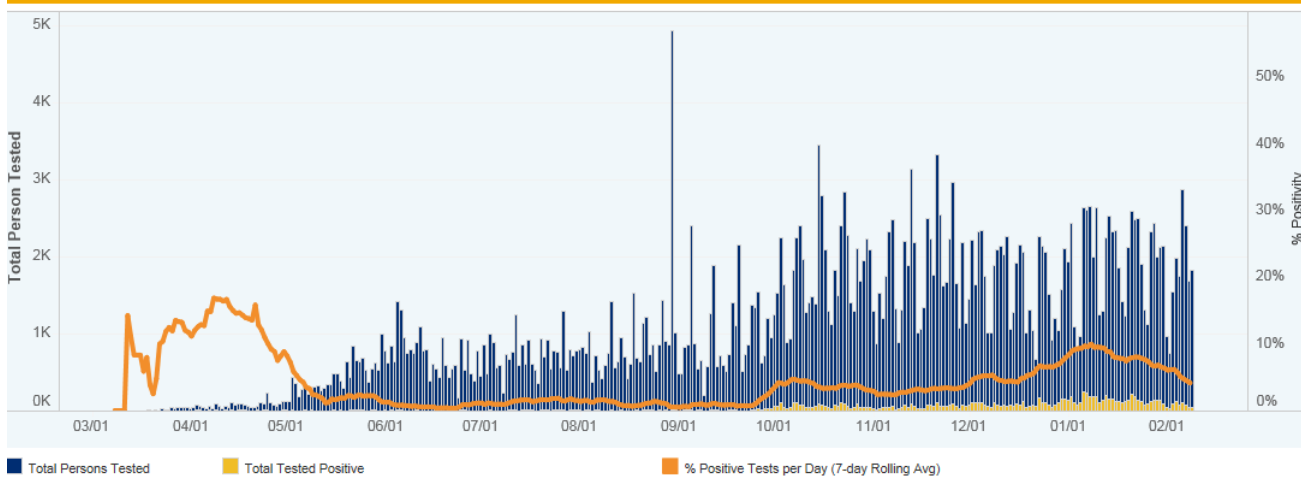
NYS reports on COVID Positivity Rates by County and also on COVID Cluster Spots. Each week, we will include the most recent info. Increasing positivity can impact all businesses. Per CMS guidelines:

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals Vary by Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

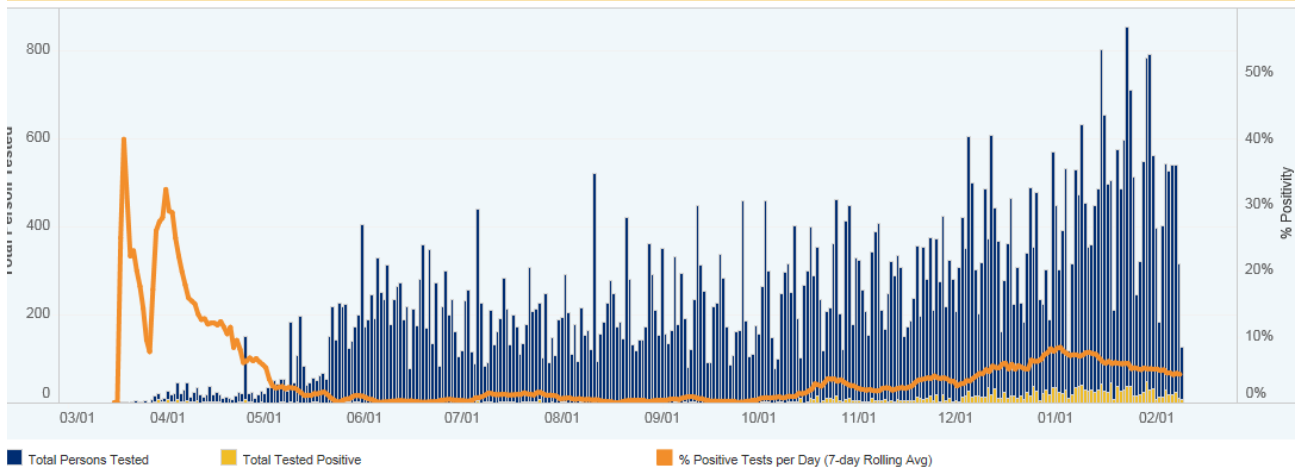
% Positive Results Over Time - Broome



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	1,792	44	2.5%	4.1%

% Positive Results Over Time - Chenango



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Chenango	120	7	5.8%	4.3%

Currently, none of our facilities are in a COVID cluster hot spot.

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, the SNFs at all GSC facilities are required to pause visitation due to positive COVID test results. GSVE ALR and GSFH ACF (ALR and ALP) are currently open for visitation.

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-19 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.

From Leading Age NY's webpage on Advocacy:

Urge the Governor to Re-consider Requirements for Family Visitation

You have asked what can you do and who you can talk to about the nursing home and adult care facility (ACF) visitation restrictions. If you are frustrated by the limitations that have been placed on families and residents, the costs and availability of testing which families are now subject to, and/or the lack of recognition for the quality of life for our seniors, you can call the Governor's office and urge the State to take a more reasonable approach to family visitation.

The Governor's office can be reached at this phone number: **1-518-474-8390**.

It can be overwhelming making these calls but just be you, speak from the heart and explain what your experience and frustrations have been. These talking points may also be helpful to you on your phone call:

- Due to your overly strict rules on visitation in nursing homes, I have not seen my loved one since _____.
- Now in order to visit, I must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result repeatedly.
- These repeated tests are not readily accessible to me and will be cost-prohibitive.
- Nursing home residents have endured months of isolation from the people they love most and are experiencing emotional distress.
- I urge you to reconsider this guidance and find a more balanced approach that considers not just the risks of COVID-19, but also the emotional isolation residents are feeling.

For those that would prefer to send an email to the Governor, they can do so using this [online form](#).

Although the progress on the issue of visitation is slow, family advocacy is critical to any success we will see in the coming weeks. Keep up the pressure, and thank you for your efforts.

The online form referenced can be found at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>

Donations

- **The family of Kathy Hall provided meals for the GSVE SNF staff.**

Please remember to contact the facility's Administrator prior to making a non-monetary 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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