

February 24, 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](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	20	0	4	16	1	0	0	0	1
GSFH	30	0	8	21 and 1 inconclusive	0	0	0	0	0
GSVE	25	0	5	20	0	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	20	0	2	18	0	0	0	0	0
GSFH	103	0	12	91	11	0	0	0	11
GSVE	52	0	2	50	1	0	0	0	1
Tested as of 2/9/20					2/17/21-2/23/21				
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**

<b>Mass Resident Testing</b>				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	47	0	25	22
GSVE	21	0	21	0
Chase	11	0	11	0

**NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 2/17/21-2/23/21:**

**Mass Staff Testing**

<b>Mass Employee Testing</b>				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	338	0	79	259
GSVE	264	1	263	0
Chase	154	1 repeat positive	152	1

**Staff Testing 2/17/21-2/23/21**

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*

2/21/21

- An employee who works in the HC Administration tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. No close contacts were identified.

**Resident Testing 2/10/21-2/16/21:** 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 tests.

*GSVE*: No new positive tests.

**COVID related Deaths 2/10/21-2/16/21**

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

*Chase:* While we are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at Chase, it is with great sadness that we share that an employee in our Nursing department who was being treated for COVID-19 passed away on 2/20/21 after a prolonged hospital stay. This employee was a valued member of our Chase team and will be deeply missed by many residents, staff, and family members. Our thoughts are with this employee's family as they go through this very difficult time.

*GSVE:* We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 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 is offering clinics 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. **Great news: The next round of vaccines will be available this Friday**, and we will contact people who are interested as soon as we finalize the details.
    - 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**
  - The federal program which supplied vaccines for staff is ending, and we are preparing to transition into a new phase of the staff vaccination program. Supplies are still limited, but GSC has been informed we may have an opportunity to receive additional vaccines in the near future. 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.**

## **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-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	1	0	0
GSVE	0	1	0	0	2
Chase	1	0	0	0	0

## NYS Visitation Guidance

The state has issued new guidance, which goes into place on Friday, February 26.

NYSDOH will focus on the county's COVID-19 rate of transmission to determine if nursing home visitation is allowed and if visitors will need to be tested for COVID-19 prior to the visit. If a visitor tests positive, they will not be allowed to visit.

- County COVID-19 transmission rate less than 5% - no COVID-19 test required but encouraged by NYSDOH prior to visiting.
- County COVID-19 transmission rate between 5% and 10% - must be tested for COVID-19 within 72 hours of the visit. Can be a PCR or rapid test, NYSDOH will provide rapid tests to the nursing homes at no cost.
- County COVID-19 transmission rate greater than 10% - no visitation allowed except for compassionate care.

**We are disappointed that the new guidance continues to require visitation to pause if there has been a positive case of COVID-19 within 14 days. We continue to work with our association to encourage NYS to adopt more liberal guidelines.**

Good Shepherd is adopting our policies to reflect these changes, but there are some outstanding questions:

- The Governor's website states "Alternatively, visitors may provide proof of a completed COVID-19 vaccination no less than 14 days from the date of the visit and no more than 90 days prior to the visit" in lieu of testing, but the Department of Health guidance does not include this.
- Per DOH guidance, facilities should use the COVID-19 county positivity rates, found on the CMS COVID-19 Nursing Home Data site to determine when visitation should be paused. But previously we have been told the NYS positivity rates were an acceptable alternative to the CMS rates.

We are working with LeadingAgeNY for clarification on these issues. Furthermore, our facilities may determine that we will require and provide a free COVID-19 rapid test even when the county rate is less than 5%.

## Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

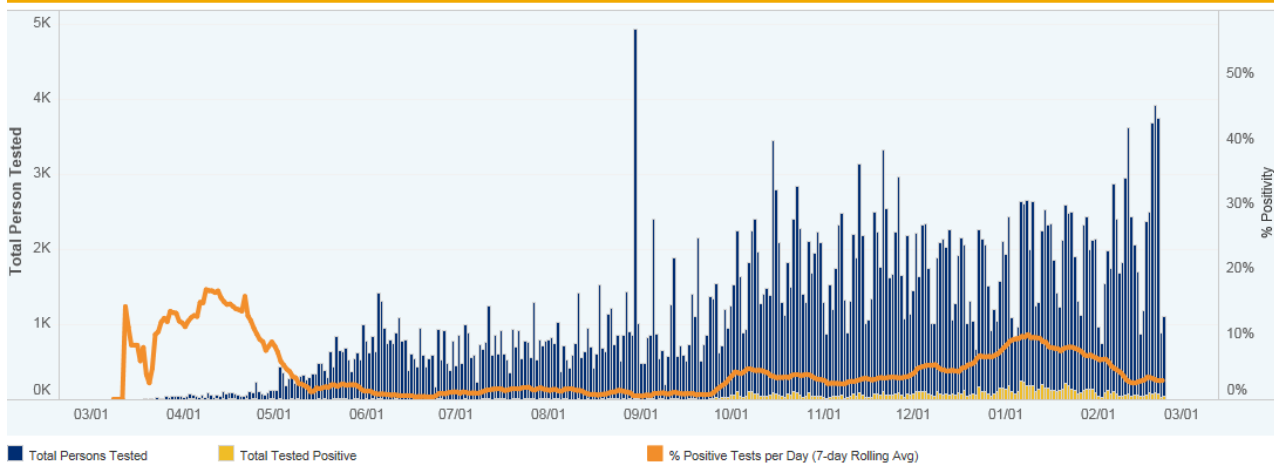
NYS reports on COVID Positivity Rates by County and also on COVID Cluster Spots. Each week, we will include the most recent info. Increasing positivity can impact all businesses. Per CMS guidelines:

**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.

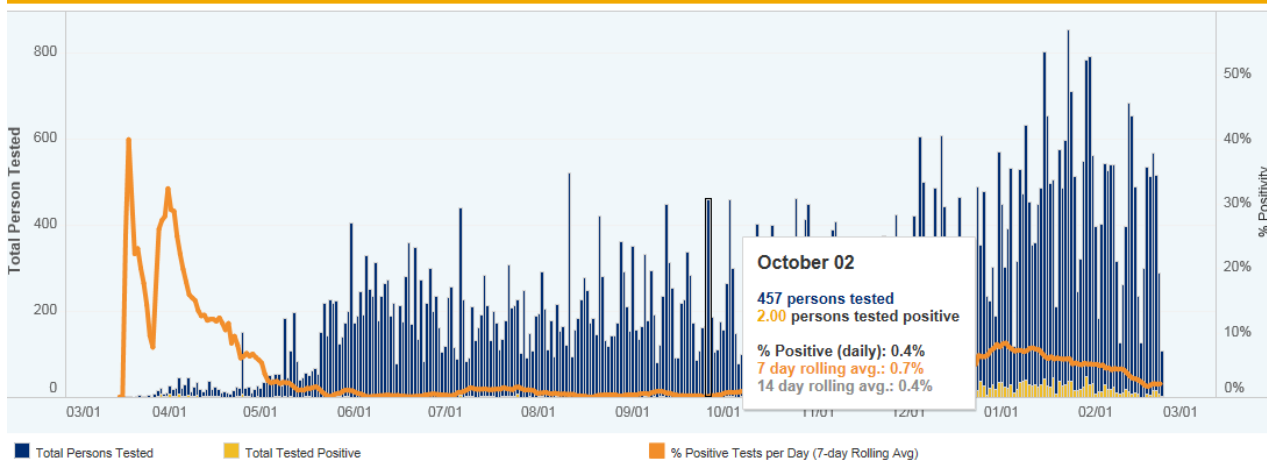
## % Positive Results Over Time - Broome



### Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	1,056	51	4.8%	2.9%

## % Positive Results Over Time - Chenango



### Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Chenango	106	2	1.9%	2.1%

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: The GSFH ACF (ALR and ALP) is currently open for visitation, and we anticipate SNF will open on 2/27/21. At GSVE, we anticipate opening ALR on 2/26/21, but SNF cannot open until 3/9/21 at the earliest. Chase is anticipated to re-open on 2/26/21.**

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. 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 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**

- At GSFH, Lee Shepherd created boxes out of cards for all of our Cameo Court, Parlor City and Arlington Center residents filled with individually wrapped candies.

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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