



April 14, 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 5pm 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.

We will no longer be presenting the charts for testing for cause and mass testing but will continue to provide narratives for any new positive cases.

Staff Testing 4/7/21-4/13/21

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

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase

4/8/21: One of our employees in the dietary department tested positive for COVID19. The employee will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff or residents were considered to be a close contact.

GSVE: No new positive test results

Resident Testing 4/7/21-4/13/21

GSFH: : No new positive test results.

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 4/7/21-4/13/21

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 and ACF**
 - In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE) and Chenango County (Chase), NYS through the local health department is supplying vaccines for new residents, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines.
- **Independent Living**
 - **The Medicine Shoppe, our Long Term Care Pharmacy has offered clinics for our IL residents.**
 - GSFH: All apartment residents who elected to receive the vaccine have received the vaccine.
 - GSVE: All IL residents who elected to receive the vaccine have received it.
 - As of 4/6/21, NYS residents age 16 or older were eligible to be vaccinated at other sites. For those 16-17, the only approved vaccine is the Pfizer vaccine. 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 ended, and we are in a new phase of the staff vaccination program. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE) and Chenango County (Chase), 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.

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.

Current Vaccination Statistics: Please note these figures are very fluid as we have new admissions, discharges, new hires, terminated employees, etc. We are holding regular vaccine clinics to allow new residents and staff to get vaccinated, as well as people who may have changed their minds since previous clinics.

| Vaccination Status as of 4/13/21 | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | SNF Residents | ACF Residents | SNF Employees | ACF Employees | IL Employees |
| GSFH | Rehab 94% and Cameo Court 100% | 100% | 60% | 49% | n/a |
| GSVE | 97% | 100% | 80% | 56% | 73% |
| Chase | 100% | n/a | 38% | n/a | n/a |

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. **Help us reach herd immunity!!**

Please be sensitive to the fact that vaccination status is a personal matter, and some people may have made the decision to decline the vaccine for various reasons, or may be medically ineligible for the vaccine.

CDC Revises Cleaning Recommendations for *Non-Health Care Settings*

On April 5, 2021 the CDC issued revised guidance on cleaning surfaces in non-health care community based buildings, relaxing recommendations for some types of cleaning when COVID-19 risks aren't elevated.

Because the virus that causes COVID-19 can land on surfaces, it's possible for people to become infected if they touch those surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth or eyes, the CDC said. In most situations, however, the risk of infection from touching a surface is low, and when no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infections are known to be in a particular space, "cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility," the CDC said.

The agency recommends regular hand washing or use of hand sanitizer, along with regular cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to reduce the risk of infection. The CDC recommends cleaning with products containing soap or detergent to reduce germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and potentially weakening or damaging some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces.

Disinfecting kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. If certain conditions are met, the guidance recommends either cleaning more frequently or disinfecting (in addition to cleaning) in shared spaces. Specifically, the conditions cited are those that can increase the risk of infection from touching surfaces, such as high transmission of COVID-19 in the community, a low number of people wearing masks, infrequent hand hygiene, or the space is occupied by people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In the event a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 was in a building within the past 24 hours, the building should be cleaned and disinfected.

NYS Mandated Staff Testing

Per NYS, full-time staff in SNFs are required to be tested twice per week for COVID 19, and those who do not meet the FT 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. GSC has updated our policy for testing for staff based in IL and ALR to require only one test per week which is what NYS DOH recommends. This will help conserve resources and ease some of the burden on the staff administering the tests.

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

CMS positivity rates by county is the metric used for visitation per NYS. Note CMS stats lag one week behind.

| County | FIPS | State | FEMA Region | Population | NCHS Urban Rural Classification | Tests in prior 14 days | 14-day test rate | Percent Positivity in prior 14 days | Test Positivity Classification - 14 day |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Broome County, NY | 36007 | NY | 2 | 190,488 | Small metro | 12,826 | 6,733 | 5.3% | Yellow |
| Chenango County, NY | 36017 | NY | 2 | 47,207 | Non-core | 4,161 | 8,814 | 5.0% | Yellow |

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: Chase is open for visitation.

At GSFH, all levels of care are open for visitation.

At GSVE, all levels of care are 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.

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

Donations

- The New Berlin Legion Auxiliary donated two big boxes of snacks and fruit and cheese last week to Chase

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>

Kathy Swezey

Jennifer Davidson

Gail Murray

GSFH Executive Director

GSVE Health Care Administrator

Chase Acting Licensed Nursing Home Administrator*

*Gabby Skillen is currently on Family Medical Leave and we anticipate her return in June.