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April 28, 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-19 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 4/21/21-4/27/21

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: No new positive test results

Resident Testing 4/21/21-4/27/21

GSFH: No new positive test results.

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 4/21/21-4/27/21

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

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

GSVE: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 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.

Yesterday, Governor Cuomo announced New York's state-run mass-vaccination centers will no longer require an advance appointment. Starting Thursday 4/30/21, any New Yorker age 16 or older will be able to walk in for a shot. Previously, the state only allowed walk-ins age 60 or older at 16 of its mass-vaccination sites.

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 4/27/21					
	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	100%	100%	65%	56%	n/a
GSVE	97%	100%	78%	57%	75%
Chase	100%	n/a	52%	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.

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- Week ending 4/20/21

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

County	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	190,488	Small metro	12,061	6,332	6.0%	Yellow
Chenango County, NY	47,207	Non-core	4,122	8,732	4.9%	Green

NYS Re-Opening Update

On 4/19/21, Governor Cuomo announced that movie theater capacity will increase to 33 percent starting April 26. Low-risk, indoor and outdoor arts and entertainment - including museums, aquariums, zoos and botanical gardens - will increase to 50 percent capacity also beginning April 26.

Beginning May 19, spectator capacity will increase to 25 percent at large-scale arenas, and event venues, including professional and collegiate sports, and major performances.

Restaurants and bars were permitted to remain open to midnight effective 4/19/21.

On 4/12/21, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced new updated guidance for graduation and commencement ceremonies organized by schools, colleges and universities. Effective May 1, indoor and outdoor graduation and

commencement ceremonies will be allowed with limited attendee capacity, depending on the event size and the location (e.g., stadium, arena, arts and entertainment venue). All event organizers and venues hosting ceremonies must follow the State's strict health and safety protocols, including requiring face masks, social distancing, health screenings and collection of contact tracing information.

For events that exceed the social gathering limits of 100 people indoors or 200 people outdoors, event organizers and venues must notify the local health department and require attendees to show proof of a recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization prior to entry. These requirements are consistent with the State's guidance for other congregate commercial and social activities, including catered receptions, performing arts, and sports competitions.

Outdoor Events:

- Large-scale ceremonies of over 500 people at outdoor venues will be limited to 20 percent of capacity, applicable to venues with a total capacity of 2,500 or more.
- Medium-scale ceremonies of 201-500 people at outdoor venues will be limited to 33 percent of capacity.
- Small-scale ceremonies of up to 200 people or 2 attendees per student at outdoor venues will be limited to 50 percent of capacity. Proof of recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization is optional.

Indoor Events:

- Large-scale ceremonies of over 150 people at indoor venues will be limited to 10 percent of capacity, applicable to venues with a total capacity of 1,500 or more.
- Medium-scale ceremonies of 101-150 people at indoor venues will be limited to 33 percent of capacity.
- Small-scale ceremonies of up to 100 people or 2 attendees per student at indoor venues will be limited to 50 percent of capacity. Proof of recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization is optional.

Masks When Outdoors (new info)

- Governor Cuomo announced yesterday at a COVID-19 vaccination center in Binghamton that New York will no longer require those who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to wear masks outdoors in most situations, putting its mandate in line with new federal guidelines. Those who are two weeks removed from their final vaccine dose do not have to wear masks during outdoor activities and recreation "except in certain crowded settings and venues." New York's mandate previously required mask usage in outdoor settings when unable to social distance, even when vaccinated.

Food Sales Requirement in Bars and Restaurants (new info):

- Effective tomorrow, Thursday 4/29/21, NYS will no longer require patrons to buy food if they go to a bar or restaurant to buy a drink.

Social distancing, masks, health screenings and all other health and safety protocols remain in effect.

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

- No new donations were received.

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
GSFH Executive Director
Home

Jennifer Davidson
GSVE Health Care Administrator

Gail Murray
Chase Acting Licensed Nursing
Administrator*

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