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May 5, 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-19 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.

Change in Schedule for COVID Letters

Effective this month, we will be moving to generating the COVID letters for residents, families and staff every two weeks rather than the current weekly schedule. Of course, we will continue to do broadcasts of any positive test results as required, and will also update any changes to the visitation schedule on a timely basis.

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 4/28/21-5/4/21

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 4/28/21-5/4/21

GSFH: No new positive test results.

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 4/28/21-5/4/21

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.

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 5/4/21

	SNF Residents	ACF Residents	SNF Employees	ACF Employees	IL Employees
GSFH	100%	100%	65%	56%	n/a
GSVE	100%	97%	79%	57%	75%
Chase	100%	n/a	53%	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 days
Broome County, NY	190,488	Small metro	14,773	7,755	5.1%	Yellow
Chenango County, NY	47,207	Non-core	5,055	10,708	3.8%	Green

NYS Re-Opening Update: Significant Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions (source www.governor.ny.gov)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont yesterday announced a significant easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on the region's businesses, venues and gatherings given significant progress in vaccinations and sustained reduction in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

Social Distance-based Business Capacities

Effective May 19, most business capacities—which are currently based upon percentage of maximum occupancy—will be removed in New York and New Jersey. Businesses will only be limited by the space available for patrons or parties of patrons to maintain the required social distance of 6 feet. This new distance-based maximum capacity will apply across commercial settings, including retail, food services, gyms and fitness centers, amusement and family entertainment, hair salons, barber shops and other personal care services, among other settings. It will also apply in houses of worship.

Increase in Social and Residential Gathering Limits

In New York beginning May 10, the outdoor social gathering limit will increase from 200 to 500 people. Beginning May 19, the indoor social gathering limit will increase from 100 to 250 people. Also, the outdoor residential gathering limit of 25 people will be removed, reverting to the social gathering limit of 500 people with space for appropriate social distancing, and the indoor residential gathering limit will increase from 10 to 50 people. In New York, any event gatherings in excess of the social gathering limits may only occur if all individuals present proof of full vaccination status or recent negative COVID-19 test result.

Event Venues

Congregate commercial and social events in New York—such as those at venues that host sports competitions, performing arts and live entertainment, and catered receptions—can exceed the social gathering limits of 500 people outdoors or 250 people indoors if all attendees over the age of four present either proof of full vaccination status or recent negative COVID-19 test result and the required social distancing can be accommodated.

Starting May 19, large-scale indoor event venues will operate at 30 percent capacity, which is an increase from the current 10 percent capacity limit. Large-scale outdoor event venues will operate at 33 percent. Social distancing, masks, and other applicable health protocols will still apply, including the requirement of attendee proof of full vaccination or recent negative COVID-19 test result.

Industry Reopening Requirements

While most industry capacity restrictions will be lifted, industry-specific requirements will remain in effect for a longer period of time, including state or local health authority event notification, health screening, contact information for tracing, enhanced air handling and building system standards, hand hygiene, and environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols. The State will continue to provide additional guidance on these provisions as they apply to each industry.

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

Jennifer Davidson
GSVE Health Care Administrator

Gail Murray
Chase Acting Licensed Nursing Home
Administrator*

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

