



August 13, 2020



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

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	11	0	0	11	0	0	0	0
GSFH	6	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
GSVE	11	0	1*	10	0	0	0	0
			* last worked 3/29					
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	10	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
GSFH	21	0	0	21	0	0	0	0
GSVE	21	0	0	21	1	0	0	1
Tested as of 8/5/20					8/6/20-8/12/20			
Please note some testing was purely precautionary as the individual was asymptomatic. Ex: fall led to ER visit and tested.								

We continue to have a daily monitoring system to monitor all residents for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, as well as our daily screening for all staff.

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, or staff testing done as part of any pre-op procedures.

**NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff**

We continue to do the testing of our staffs as required by NYS Executive Order. Per Executive Order, each employee is tested *once per week*. This Executive Order was extended through September 4, 2020. The test is a simple nasal swab, and results usually arrive within 48 hours.

Please note testing is different than screening. Screening staff involves staff answering a series of questions about travel, work and symptoms, and having their temperature taken at the start of their shifts and every 12 hours thereafter. Testing is a laboratory test to find out if a person has coronavirus (COVID-19).



This requirement to self-quarantine for 14 days includes not only visitors, but also New York State residents returning from the affected states. *Please keep this in mind as you plan any vacations while the order is in effect.*

All out-of-state travelers from designated states must complete a form upon entering New York. Travelers who leave the airport without completing the form will be subject to a \$2,000 fine and may be brought to a hearing and ordered to complete mandatory quarantine. Travelers coming to New York from designated states through other means of transport, including trains and cars, must fill out the form online.

The quarantine requirements do not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel (e.g., layovers, rest areas)

### **Dental and Podiatry Services**

Currently NYS only allows these services if *medically necessary*, which means routine services have been suspended. Emergency services can still be provided. NYS has also directed that if a facility meets the criteria for visitation, these providers will also be allowed to resume their services. We will be prepared to resume these services as soon as we have clearance to do so.

### **Salon Services**

NYS currently allows Beauty Salons in the greater community to open with appropriate PPE use and IC practices, and with certain services prohibited. However, the State is only allowing beautician services in Health Care if the beautician is an actual facility employee. Our facilities have different models for providing these services and are, therefore, impacted differently:

GSVE: GSVE, in partnership with Nick's Hair Design in Endwell, operates a Beauty Salon in the Village Center for our IL residents. This has been re-opened since June 16<sup>th</sup>, and all NYS required guidelines are being followed. Nick's also provides the beautician for our HC residents. Unfortunately, because this beautician is not a direct employee of GSVE, we cannot provide professional beautician services to our HC residents. But our nursing staff continue to provide regular shampoos and we make every effort to keep our residents looking their best despite the lack of professional services.

Chase: Chase has three beauticians that they contract with for services. As with GSVE, we are unable to utilize their services because they are not directly employed by Chase. And also as with GSVE, our residents' hair is not being neglected despite the unavailability of professional beauticians.

GSFH: GSFH operates a salon that normally services all of our residents. The beauticians are directly employed by GSFH. At this time, we will be resuming the operations of the salon for Independent Living residents only with a single resident seen at a time. Services will be limited to shampoos, haircuts and blow dries and appointment will be done every two weeks until we are caught up. The beauticians will also go to the units to provide services to our ACF and SNF residents observing the same Infection Control protocols and limitations on services offered.

### **IL Resident Activities**

GSVE was able to re-open the pool June 22, 2020, under NYS guidelines. Residents need to sign up in advance because we are limited to 10 participants. More recently, we have been able to offer small group activities such as "Gentle Yoga" and Wii Bowling in the Social Hall and "Canasta" in the Game Room. While our Fitness Center remains closed to everyone but Outpatient Rehab patients, we are encouraging fitness and socialization in new and creative ways.

At GSFH, Monday night is movie night in our library with popcorn and drinks served (and social distancing respected); and a few times a month, we take a cart door to door with coffee and donuts and spend some time one on one with our apartment residents. We are also planning an ice cream sundae cart soon.



## **CMS\NYS Required Notifications When Staff or Resident Tests Positive to COVID**

As we reviewed last week, 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.

To help us meet these requirements, we utilize 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. Up until now, Patti Mackey has issued all these broadcasts. Beginning next week, we will be establishing a facility specific rotation for who will be responsible for the broadcast. For GSFH, broadcasts will be made by Kathy Swezey, GSFH Executive Director, or Linda Parke, GSC HR Director. For GSVE, broadcasts will be made by MaryKay McKinney, GSVE IL Director, or Jennifer Davidson, GSVE HC Administrator. Chase broadcasts will be made by Patti Mackey, GSC COO, or Gabby Skillen, Chase Executive Director.

**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: The news is reporting NYS has allowed visits to resume in nursing homes and adult care facilities. When will our facilities allow visitors?*

**A:** We will continue to address this question each week as we believe this addresses one of the most critical challenges facing our facilities, our resident and their family members. Unfortunately, there has been no changes since last week on this issue.

At this time, none of our facilities are in a position to re-open for visits, including outside visits, due primarily to the criteria pertaining to 28 days COVID-free. This criteria is incredibly burdensome on LTC facilities as it pertains to both residents and staff. While we are very fortunate in that none of our facilities has had a resident test positive for COVID, they have all experienced employees who tested positive but who were asymptomatic.

As we stated previously, we do not agree with this advisory as it is currently written and are advocating against it. And we encourage you to advocate personally on this issue by reaching out to your elected state and local officials.

*Advocacy groups are actively seeking changes to this policy, and we are increasingly hopeful there will be some changes, but unfortunately cannot provide a timeline or any guarantees.*

In addition, please remember when visitation does resume, it will at least initially be very different from pre-COVID-19 visits. NYS has established very specific parameters for visits, and all our campuses are working on designing plans that facilitate visits but also comply with the NYS requirements. Some things to be aware of: All visits will be outside with

very limited exceptions. Social distancing and face masks will be required. There will also be limits on the number of visitors at any given time, limitations on the duration of the visits, and all visits must be pre-scheduled.

We will provide more details once we are closer to reopening for visitations. We know how anxious you all are to be able to see your loved ones on person, and we are actively preparing to be ready when we meet all the NYS criteria for reopening for visitations.

## Donations

Thank you to the following individuals or groups for their generous donations of Personal Protective Equipment or other support to our staff and residents:

- The Reynolds family brought a birthday cake to share with the staff on Mr. Reynolds unit at GSVE.
- Mrs. Smith Rowe's family and CVS on West State Street donated cactus plants for our residents at GSFH.



We are very grateful for all the support and donations, but please remember to contact the facility's Administrator prior to making a 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

Gabby Skillen  
Chase Executive Director