



December 16, 2020



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

“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-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	15	0	1	14	1	1	0	0	
GSFH	17	0	3	13 and 1 inconclusive	1	1	0	0	
GSVE	20	0	3	17	1	1	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	14	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	
GSFH	67	0	8	59	5	0	0	5	
GSVE	37	0	1	36	1	0	0	1	
Tested as of 12/8/20					12/9/20-12/15/20				
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, or staff testing done as part of any pre-op procedures.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 12/9/20-12/15/20:

Mass Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	188	1	187	0
GSVE	151	2	149	0
Chase	108	0	106	2

Staff Testing 12/9/20-12/15/20

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

GSFH:

12/11/20

- An employee in the Rehab unit in the Skilled Nursing facility tested positive. This employee has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No residents were considered close contacts with the positive staff member. Four staff members were considered contacts of the positive employee who works in the skilled nursing facility but were considered to have “low level exposure” due to the PPE being used at the time of contact.

GSVE:

12/11/20

- An employee in the Skilled Nursing department tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff members or residents were in close contact.

12/13/20

- An employee in the Dietary department on the assisted living unit tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. No staff members or residents were in close contact.

Chase: No new staff members tested positive.

Resident Testing 12/9/20-12/15/20

GSFH:

12/15/20

- A resident on Cameo Court tested positive for COVID-19. The resident is asymptomatic. No other residents were close contacts, and 12 staff are considered at low level risk.

Chase:

12/9/20

- Five of our residents tested positive for COVID-19, one of whom has passed away subsequent to the testing. Although there were underlying conditions, the cause of death must be listed as COVID-19. Our thoughts are with the resident's family and other loved ones. We want to reassure all of our families that we are doing everything within our power to keep your loved ones safe.
- Regarding the other residents who tested positive, no staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the personal protective equipment that is required to be worn in the facility at all times.

12/12/20

- Four of our residents tested positive for COVID-19, one of whom has passed away subsequent to the testing. Our heartfelt condolences go out to this family during this very difficult time.
- Regarding the other residents who tested positive per Department of Health recommendations for contact tracing, no staff or residents were considered to be a close contact due to the personal protective equipment that is required to be worn in resident care areas at all times.

GSVE: No new resident positive results.

Salon Service

Good Shepherd Fairview Home directly employs their beauticians and has been allowed to provide services on the units with some restrictions depending on the level of care. The week after Thanksgiving, they will be expanding this.

At Good Shepherd Village at Endwell, salon services continue in ALR and IL, but not in SNF.

At Chase, we have not yet been able to resume salon services.

Vaccination

We continue to monitor the news on approvals for COVID-19 and the federal recommendations for prioritization.

On December 4th, Gov. Cuomo announced New York will opt in to a federal vaccine distribution program for the state's nursing home residents and staff. People living and working in nursing homes and long-term care facilities will be at the top of the list to receive the first 170,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer when it arrives in New York on Dec. 15.

All Good Shepherd facilities had previously enrolled in both the federal and NYS programs to ensure we would be ready to move quickly when the vaccines received approval. This announcement by the Governor will streamline the process for us.

The federal program asked at enrollment that we select a Pharmacy to partner with, and we chose CVS. We continue to work closely with CVS on the logistics of this vaccination program:

- In a change from what we reported last week, at this time, **only SNF residents** are eligible to receive the vaccine through this program. ACF and Independent Living residents are not considered eligible under this program at this time. But ACF will be included under a different program soon and advocacy groups such as LeadingAgeNY are pressing for expansion to IL located on multilevel campuses.
- SNF staff and staff with contact with SNF residents are also eligible for the program.
- We had planned for residents to receive the vaccinations in their rooms, but this has changed as the CDC is recommending residents be observed for a period of time post-vaccination.
- There will be no cost to the resident or families for this vaccination.

- Once started, this process will all happen very quickly. Currently, GSFH is tentatively scheduled for 12/21, GSVE for 12/30, and Chase for 12/23. The vaccine requires two doses to be effective so second clinics will be scheduled in January to complete the process.
- **Families of residents in SNF will be asked to sign consent forms if the resident is unable to consent.** Staff will be in contact with families for consent in this case. We are attaching sample consent forms for you to preview in advance but these are for information only.
- **We are hoping all of our residents will elect to be vaccinated unless there are contraindications.** But this is not mandatory for our residents. To help you consider whether to consent to the vaccine, we are also attaching some generic COVID -19 Vaccination information from the CDC and from Omnicare (CVS).

NYS DOH Guidance on Residents Leaving the Facility for Holiday Visits

On November 24, 2020, NYS issued guidance on this topic. While there are still some unknowns which we are clarifying, the requirements are serious and their impact should be carefully evaluated when making plans for the Holidays.

- Residents who leave a facility must:
 - Quarantine or minimize contact to the extent safely possible prior to their return to the facility.
 - **Be quarantined on transmission-based precautions upon return to the facility for 14 days.**
 - **Test negative immediately (within 24 hours) prior** to return to the facility.
 - **Be tested at least three times** during the 14-day quarantine period at the facility, including on the first day (upon return) and the last day that a resident must be quarantined.
 - Residents who leave and a family or friend must attest in writing that they:
 - Are aware of the risks involved with taking the resident out of the facility;
 - Will follow masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene practices pursuant to CDC and DOH directives;
 - Will notify the facility if the resident becomes ill within one week of leaving the facility;
 - Will notify the facility if anyone with whom the resident socialized tests positive for COVID-19 or influenza or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 and influenza within 14 days of the resident's return to the facility;
 - Will communicate with the facility about a return date for the resident to the facility in accordance with the facility's policy; and
 - Will quarantine or minimize contact (or assist the resident to do so) to the extent safely possible prior to return to a nursing home.

Please consider these requirements carefully in considering bringing your loved one out of the facility for a visit, particularly the requirement for a 14 day quarantine upon return and the impact of this on your loved one.

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: Currently, all levels of care at all GSC facilities are required to pause visitation due to recent positive COVID test results.

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. COVID prevalence is increasing in NYS. 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 the NYS DOH guidelines for visitation for ACFs and SNFs are different in many ways, including how many people can visit at a time and the SNF requirement that visitors present verified negative COVID test results within the last week prior to the visit. If you are concerned about this requirement and the burdens it presents, please reach out to the Governor's office at 1-518-474-8390 to voice your concerns.

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

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

- The family of Steve Slater, a GSFH CNA, filled stockings for all the residents on Cameo Court
- The Hawk radio show "Christmas Card Campaign" sent cards and small gifts for our residents
- Sherry Laskowski donated Christmas decorations including a Spode tree
- The Cortese family donated food gifts to the staff at GSVE SNF

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>

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