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May 14, 2020



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

Status Update

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	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	1
GSFH	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	0
GSVE	9	0	1*	8	1	1	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	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	
GSFH	9	0	0	9	2	1	0	
GSVE	5	0	0	5	1	0	0	
Tested as of 5/6/20				5/7/20-5/13/20				
Please note some testing was purely precautionary as the individual was asymptomatic. Ex: fall led to ER visit and tested.								
Correction: Last week's count for GSVE residents was missing 1 resident tested which was a negative.								

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

Contingency Plan for a Positive Resident

Last week, we discussed the negative pressure areas constructed at each campus, and made the following statement: “Any resident who tests positive will immediately be sent to the negative pressure room constructed at each campus.” We realized afterwards that this could be misleading. These areas are located in our Skilled Nursing Facilities, and we should have stated that any *SNF* resident who tests positive will immediately be sent to the negative pressure room and may be transferred to a hospital dependent on the severity of their symptoms. ACF residents who test positive would be considered for a transfer to the SNF negative pressure room, or may be transferred to a hospital if their condition warrants. Independent Living Residents would follow their health care provider’s directives, which might range from self-isolation for 14 days to hospitalization dependent again upon the severity of their symptoms.

First Responders Parade

On May 8th, Broome County First Responders toured all the areas 11 Nursing Homes and 2 hospitals to salute our staffs. Staff at GSFH and GSVE lined the up to watch outside while our residents enjoyed the event from their windows.



Staying in Touch with Your Loved One

In person visits remain prohibited in most circumstances, with the exception of end of life visits. And while Broome County is re-opening, we do not anticipate this to change in the near future. But we have worked hard to find creative ways for you to stay in touch with your loved ones. We offer FaceTime visits, Skype visits, and have facilitated multiple window visits for birthday celebrations and regular visits. One popular choice is Zoom on our iPads, which allows multiple family members to interact at once. We have shared many photos and videos on our facility Facebook pages highlighting the activities we are providing and some of the wonderful events taking place. We understand how important it is for both you and our residents to maintain communication, especially during this difficult time. We are also open to exploring any ideas you might have.

Mask: FAQs

Why do all GS staff working directly with residents or on resident units wear a surgical facemask and not a cloth mask? Per the CDC, cloth face coverings are not considered PPE because their capability to protect healthcare personnel (HCP) is unknown. Surgical facemasks should be reserved for HCP. Also, per NYS DOH, use of cloth masks or other homemade masks (e.g. bandanas, scarves) for Health Care Personnel is not recommended.

When will GS staff wear N95 masks? N95 masks are to be utilized for staff working directly with COVID positive or suspected COVID positive patients.

Why is the CDC recommending cloth face coverings instead of medical grade facemasks for most people? Masks and N95 respirators are in short supply and should be reserved for healthcare workers or other medical first responders, as recommended by CDC guidance.

Why do you need to wear cloth face coverings in the community? In light of the data about how COVID-19 spreads, along with evidence of widespread COVID-19 illness in communities across the country, CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting. This is to protect people around you if you are infected, but do not have symptoms.

When do you need to wear a cloth face covering? A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting, especially in situations where you may be near people. These settings include the workplace, grocery stores and pharmacies. These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing.

Do I still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people if wearing a cloth face covering? Yes, wearing cloth face coverings is an additional public health measure people should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. A cloth face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This would be especially important if someone is infected, but does not have symptoms.

*When do our **Health Care residents** have to wear masks?* When our Health Care residents are in common areas where it is not possible to maintain social distancing of 6 feet, we will provide surgical masks.

When do our **Independent Living residents** have to wear masks? When our IL residents are in common areas where it is not possible to maintain social distancing of 6 feet, they should follow CDC and NYS guidelines and wear a face covering. We have provided cloth masks to our IL residents and many have purchased or sewn their own.

NYS DOH Voluntary Testing for all Residents

Last week, we announced Good Shepherd had been in contact with the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to explore COVID-19 viral testing for all our Health Care residents (voluntary basis) and staff (GS required.) We continue to explore this option for our residents, but as we noted last week, these tests capture a single moment in time. If we proceed with resident testing on a voluntary basis, we will provide education and seek consent from each resident or their Health Care Proxy.

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff

On Sunday, Governor Cuomo announced NYS will require that all Nursing Home and Adult Care Facility staff have twice weekly COVID-19 testing and that facilities had to submit a plan do to so by 5pm on Wednesday. This was certainly a surprise to all of us especially with no consultation with the facilities and no assurance that sufficient testing kits would be available. This requirement will be in effect until June 9, 2020, and facilities must begin the testing no later than May 20th. We are reviewing the options to allow us to meet this new mandate. Logistically, it is challenging to say the least. NYS will allow facilities to provide the testing in-house or arrange for the testing off-site, but we believe it would be less burdensome to our employees if we provide the testing on-site. To that end, we have contracted with a company to provide the testing kits, and run the lab results. Our clinical staff would collect the actual samples.

We filed our plans with DOH yesterday to comply with this directive, and will begin testing next week unless further guidance emerges from NYS.

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:

- West Windsor Baptist Church provided pre-packaged meals of spaghetti and meatballs with a tossed salad and cookies for dessert for all GSFH staff on 5/11.
- Stephanie Dye, one of our Occupational Therapists, whose daughter is in Girl Scout Troop 30562, assisted the troop in donating 52 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies to GSFH
- Binghamton Hanmaun Korean Presbyterian Church- face masks that were given out to the GSVE residents
- ColorStreet donated cloth masks to Chase



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>