



October 29, 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 5pm 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](mailto: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	11	0	0	11	1	0	0	1
GSFH	12	0	3	9	0	0	0	0
GSVE	17	0	2	15	0	0	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	10	0	0	10	3	1	0	2
GSFH	37	0	7	30	4	0	1	3
GSVE	29	0	0	29	1	0	0	1
Tested as of 10/21/20					10/22/20-10/28/20			
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. At GSFH there was an additional resident who tested positive as a result of mass testing not reflected above.

**NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 10/22/20-10/28/20:**

<b>Mass Employee Testing</b>				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	237	6 ( 2 are repeat)	231	0
GSVE	163	0	163	0
Chase	115	0	115	0

**Staff Testing 10/25/20-10/28/20**

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

**GSFH**

10/22/20

- One of our clerical staff members in our skilled nursing facility tested positive for COVID-19. There are no residents or staff who were considered close contacts.

10/23/20

- One of our clinical staff members in our skilled nursing facility has also tested positive for COVID-19 after surveillance testing. This staff member is experiencing mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days. There are no residents or staff members who were considered close contacts.
- One of our employees that works on the East Wing first floor in the office area has tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is symptomatic, and will self-isolate for 14 days. We have confirmed the staff member did not have close contact with any other staff member or resident.

10/28/20

- One of our clinical staff members in our skilled nursing facility has also tested positive for COVID-19. This staff member is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days. There were no close contacts.

GSVE: No new positive staff results.

Chase: No new positive staff results.

**Resident Testing 10/22/20-10/28/20**

**GSFH**

10/22/20

- One of our skilled nursing facility residents on our Rehab unit, who was positive for COVID 19, passed away. Although there were underlying conditions, the cause of death is considered to be COVID-19. Our heartfelt condolences go out to this family during this very difficult time. We want to reassure all families that we are doing everything within our power to keep your loved ones safe and cared for. Our commitment to our seniors

who are here at GSFH is the same as our commitment to our own families. This loss has been felt by all of our staff and providers.

10/23/20

- One of our residents on the Rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19 after exhibiting mild symptoms. All positive residents are on isolation for 14 days. No residents or staff members are considered close contacts as all staff were wearing full PPE according to CDC recommendations.
- Although we are not required by the NYS DOH, at this point, we instituted more restricted admissions requirements and will be adopting new testing protocols.

10/28/20

- One of our residents on the rehab unit tested positive for COVID-19. This resident has mild symptoms. All positive residents are on isolation for 14 days. There are no residents who were considered close contacts to the positive resident or the positive staff member.

*Chase:* No positive resident tests.

*GSVE:* No positive resident tests.

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.

#### GSFH ALP UPDATE

Three of the four residents who were hospitalized have returned to ALP after testing negative two consecutive times prior to readmission based on current guidance. One resident remains hospitalized but has tested negative twice so should be returning to GSFH soon.

#### ***NYS Quarantine Travel Restrictions.***

The list has been revised again as of 10/27/2020 (changes in italics), the advisory applies to anyone traveling from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, *California*, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and two territories – Guam and Puerto Rico. No states were removed from the list. Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania meet the criteria, but given their proximity in the region Cuomo says a quarantine is not viable. He discourages non-essential travel to those states.

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)

**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, Chase Memorial Nursing Home, Good Shepherd Fairview Home ACF (ALR, EALR, and ALP), and Good Shepherd Village at Endwell ALR are open for visitation.

Good Shepherd Village at Endwell Skilled Nursing Facility and Good Shepherd Fairview Home's SNF 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.

*Q: What kind of testing does GSC use for Employee testing and Resident COVID testing?*

A: We use different tests in different circumstances, and are compliant with all NYS and CMS directives pertaining to COVID testing.

Staff Mass Testing: We use a Real Time RT-PCR test (Real Time Reverse-Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction). Results usually are returned within 2 days. While we understand this time lapse raises some concerns, this test is more accurate and reliable than others, especially when testing asymptomatic people. This means fewer false positives resulting in furloughing healthy staff and fewer false negatives resulting in infectious personnel working. Until very recently, there was no federal or NYS guidance on using rapid results testing for mass testing (surveillance testing) in the LTC setting so most facilities were not utilizing the rapid result testing (more below).

Staff Testing for Cause: Staff being tested for cause are following the directions of their health care provider in the community or accessing public testing sites so the testing methods may vary.

Resident Mass Testing: We use the same Real Time RT-PCR test (Real Time Reverse-Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction) as we do for mass staff testing for much the same reasons.

Resident for Cause: In many cases, the health care provider will order Rapid Result Point of Care Antigen Testing to insure a quicker turnaround time when testing symptomatic residents for cause. In these circumstances, these tests perform better than they do in mass testing.

POC Antigen Testing (“Rapid Results Testing”): Until very recently, there was no federal or NYS guidance on using rapid results testing for mass testing (surveillance testing) in the LTC setting. But over the past few weeks, both CMS and NYS have issued more detailed guidance which is being reviewed by LeadingAgeNY. These guidances look at a number of variables to determine when to utilize these tests, when confirmatory RT-PCR tests would be required, and the implications for quarantining and isolation. As we learn more we may revise our internal practices to expand the use of this type of testing in certain circumstances.

## **Donations**

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

- Helen Perella’s family donated Chocolate and Famous Amos cookies to GSFH Cameo Court Staff
- Kay Seamans daughter Diana donated Chocolate to GSFH Cameo Court Staff

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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