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[www.GoodShepherdCommunities.org](http://www.GoodShepherdCommunities.org)

September 17, 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.

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.

**NYS is now recommending as a best practice that a second contact for each resident be added to our notification system. This means many of you are receiving this weekly communication for the first time. Each Thursday, you can expect to receive a weekly update. Previous letters are all posted on our website.**

**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	0	0	0	0
GSFH	9	0	3	6	0	0	0	0
GSVE	11	0	1	10	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	0	0	0	
GSFH	29	0	4	25	0	0	0	
GSVE	25	0	0	25	1	0	0	
Tested as of 9/9/20				9/10/20-9/16/20				
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 9/10-9/16/20:**

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	209	6 (3 are repeat positives)	203	0
GSVE	176	1	175	0
Chase	156	2 (1 is a repeat positive)	151	3

**Staff Testing**

In the last round of staff testing (9/10/20-9/16/20), we had the following positive results:

*GSFH*

- On 9/11/20, one of our outpatient Therapy Department staff members tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is asymptomatic, and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - The staff member had close contact with the following:
    - 4 residents on the Rehab Unit
    - 1 discharged resident from the Rehab Unit
    - 2 residents on Cameo Court
    - 1 independent resident

- 6 outpatient rehab clients
    - Exposed residents have been placed on contact droplet precautions. It is the nature of a therapist's job to be in close proximity for an often prolonged duration with the majority of their caseload, which is why this is a higher exposure rate. Both the therapist and the residents all wore masks during their treatments.
    - The staff member did not have close contact with any other staff members.
- On 9/11/20, a dietary employee who worked in SNF also tested positive. This employee is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents were in close contact with this individual.
  - Two staff members were in close contact with the dietary employee, and will follow all department of health instructions regarding quarantine.
- On 9/11/20, an employee on our assisted living program unit also tested positive. This employee has mild symptoms and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents were in close contact with this individual.
  - Three staff members were in close contact with the Assisted Living employee, and will follow all department of health instructions regarding quarantine.

*GSVE*

- On 9/16/20, a member of our SNF staff tested positive for COVID -19. The employee is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - The staff member did not have any close contact with any residents or other staff.

*Chase*

- On 9/10/20 a member of our administrative team tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is asymptomatic and will self-isolate for 14 days.
  - No residents were in close contact.
  - We originally reported 12 staff members were in close contact but further investigation reduced this to 6. These individuals will self-quarantine for 14 days.

***Resident Testing 9/10-9/16/20***

*GSFH*

- No positive resident results. Please note that mass testing was performed in the SNF based on the positive staff member. All results are negative with one pending.

*Chase*

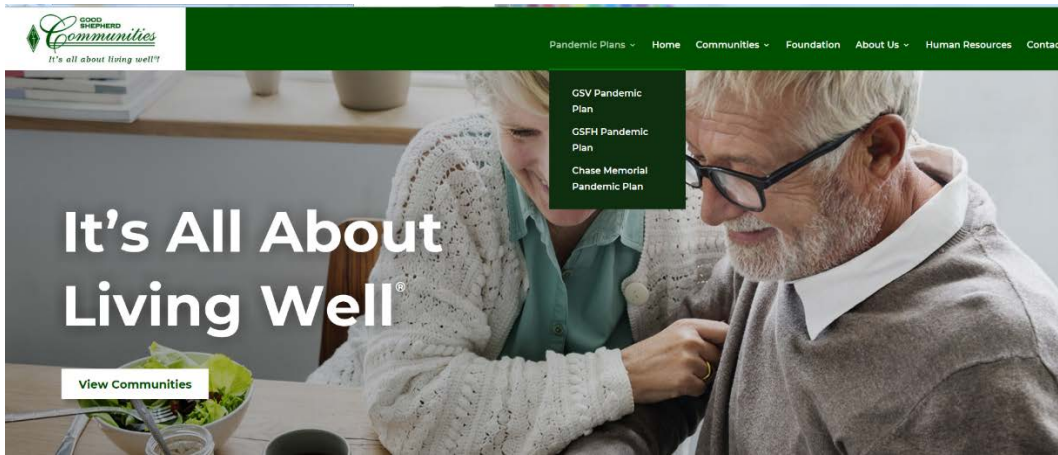
- No positive resident tests.

*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.





**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.*

### **SNF Visitation**

We received notification that SNF visitation rules had been amended to require 14 days without a positive COVID case rather than 28 as previously required. This change was made for ACF\ALR previously. At this point, none of our SNFs can meet this criteria, but we will keep families posted on this. It is also important to realize these visits will be subject to many restrictions per NYS Department of Health, and that the rules will be different for ACFs\ALRs and SNFs, which we know will be confusing. The most important difference is that SNF visitors will be required to present a verified negative COVID test within the last week prior to their visit. This requirement may prove burdensome for some people. To help you advocate on this issue, here is a basic “Call to Action”:

**Call the Governor’s office TODAY and tomorrow and urge the State to take a more reasonable approach to family visitation in nursing homes.** The Governor’s office can be reached at this phone number: **1-518-474-8390**.

**Families should speak from the heart and explain what their experience and frustrations have been, but you can use the following talking points if they are helpful:**

- Due to your overly strict rules on visitation in nursing homes, I have not seen my loved one since [REDACTED].
- Now in order to visit, I must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result repeatedly.
- These repeated tests are not readily accessible to me and will be cost-prohibitive.
- Nursing home residents have endured months of isolation from the people they love most and are experiencing emotional distress.
- I urge you to reconsider this guidance and find a more balanced approach that considers not just the risks of COVID-19, but also the emotional isolation residents are feeling.

### **GSVE ALR\EALR\SNALR**

**We are excited to announce that GSVE ALR opened yesterday for visitations. Letters and fact sheets on how these visits were to be conducted were sent to family members, and these will be updated as needed and re-broadcast.**

**And also, please remember that if at any time, a resident or staff member in ALR tests positive, we will have to suspend visitation for 14 days.**

Some of the basic rules for Good Shepherd ACF\ALR visitation:

- Visitors and residents must comply with social distancing, hand hygiene, and wear disposable face masks at all times.
- Visitors must be screened prior to the visit, including temperature checks.
- Good Shepherd will not permit any in room visitation unless resident is receiving end of life care.
- All visitation will take place outdoors, weather permitting. Only under certain limited circumstances will visitation be allowed inside in a well-ventilated space. (i.e. sudden inclement weather at the time of a scheduled visit, special resident specific circumstances to be determined by interdisciplinary team)
- Visits are by appointment only and are limited to 30 minutes. The time limitation is to allow us to schedule visits for all of our residents whenever possible.
- The number of total visitors allowed at one time will vary depending on the in-house census.
- Visitors must be 18 years of age.
- No pets allowed.
- Documentation on visitors name, address, phone, and e-mail is required.
- Good Shepherd reserves the right to refuse any visitor who refuses to be compliant with any aspect of the visitation guidelines or is under the influence, disruptive or presents a danger to any resident or staff.
- *Per NYS Department of Health guidelines directives, any visitor that fails to adhere to the protocol will be prohibited from visiting for the duration of the COVID-19 state declared public health emergency.*

**As we wait to open our other levels of care on all our campuses, 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:

- Chase received a gift of lap blankets from a donor who would prefer to remain anonymous.

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>

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