



April 30, 2020



To All Independent Living and Adult Care Residents,

**Status Update**

Each week we will provide you with updated information on COVID-testing at all of our campuses.

<b>Testing Tracker: Summary of Employees &amp; Residents Diagnostic Testing</b>								
<b>Employees</b>		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	0	0	0	0
GSFH	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
GSVE	6	0	1*	6	1	0	0	1
			* last worked 3/29					
<b>Residents</b>		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	0
GSFH	7	0	0	7	1	0	0	1
GSVE	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Tested as of 4/22/20					4/23/20-4/29			
Please note some testing was purely precautionary as the individual was asymptomatic. Ex: fall led to ER visit and tested.								

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.

**Cross-training Staff for Redeployment (if needed)**

While no Good Shepherd facility has had a resident test positive for COVID-19, we are putting plans in place to help us be prepared if we do. Here are some of the initiatives we are working on to cross-train non-direct care employees to work in Health Care in new capacities if needed:

- Feeding Assistants: In early April, NYS Department of Health announced it had received a waiver from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow facilities to train and use feeding assistants. We have already trained over 35 staff members who complete a self-study course, then work under the supervision of a member of our Therapy Department to complete a competency assessment. These staff will then provide dining assistance for residents who do not have complicated feeding problems and not for those at high risk.

- Unit Assistants: We have cross-trained staff to help out on the units with non-clinical tasks. They help maintain the unit's cleanliness and assist nursing staff in meeting resident needs with the explicit intent that these positions do not provide hands-on, direct care to the residents. This is responsible, supportive work to provide an acceptable living environment for the residents. The work is done under the direction of a staff nurse.
- Temporary CNAs: CMS has also announced a number of waivers involving CNA training and certification for the duration of the pandemic, including allowing Temporary CNAs who must demonstrate competencies across a number of topics/tasks after completing an abbreviated training program. We are hoping to offer this program on a pilot basis at GSVE and then assess whether to expand it to GSFH and Chase.

### **The New Normal Post-COVID- Reopening Our Communities**

We are all anxious to have the restrictions currently imposed lifted, and Good Shepherd management team has begun the planning process for a staged re-opening when we are allowed to do so and when we feel and are instructed it is safe for our residents and staff. We are reviewing guidance from the federal and state governments, industry experts and our peers as we start this process. The most important things to note are (1) that it will be a phased process and (2) the new normal may not mean a complete return to the old ways.

Some of the items we are brainstorming include:

- Visitations: The President's plan does not recommend visits to Health Care until Phase 3, the last phase of the 'comeback'. During Phase 3, they advise "Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed. Low risk populations should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments." We will need to incorporate these considerations into our policy on visitors, and we anticipate it being an evolving process.
- Independent Living Dining (GSFH and GSVE): Again, we anticipate a phased re-opening in keeping with NYS' plans for restaurants. Social distancing and infection control concerns will not immediately disappear when we re-open our dining areas. We will have to plan for various stages addressing density- 25% initially then hopefully increasing over time as COVID-19 subsides in our region.
- Health Care Dining (all facilities): We are currently avoiding congregate dining and are spreading our residents out throughout other areas, such as individual rooms and common areas. We will have to carefully evaluate when to fully return to congregate dining.
- Social Activities: Considerations include when to re-introduce group social activities, and whether to limit the size of these activities going forward.

At this time, we believe re-opening is still at least weeks away, but we wanted to ensure everyone that we are actively planning for it, and trying to balance our needs for social interaction with our responsibility for the safety of our residents and staff.

### **Congressman Brindisi**

Congressman Brindisi and Mike Keenan, our President/CEO, recently had a productive conversation on the challenges we are facing. The Congressman expressed his appreciation for long term care providers in general, and specifically recognized that based on his conversation with Mike, the Good Shepherd facilities were taking all the appropriate steps in response to COVID and in many cases, were well ahead of our peers. On 4/27/20, the Congressman sent us a letter (also attached) to distribute to all our employees expressing his appreciation for their commitment to our residents.

### **Donations**

Thank you to the following individuals or groups for their generous donations of Personal Protective Equipment:

- All 3 campuses received face shields from the Southern Tier 3D Printed Face Shield Project

- A family member of one of our GSFH residents generously donated \$1000 to the Foundation to support Good Shepherd's efforts during the pandemic



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.

- Good Shepherd Staff – please feel free to reach out to us about your own needs or if you are concerned about another resident.
- 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

MaryKay McKinney  
GSVE IL Executive Director