



March 3, 2021

To All Independent Living and Adult Care Residents:

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID. THIS IS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS TOPIC.

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	21	0	4	17	1	0	0	0	1
GSFH	30	0	8	21 and 1 inconclusive	0	0	0	0	0
GSVE	25	0	5	20	0	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	20	0	2	18	5	0	0	0	5
GSFH	114	0	12	102	5	0	0	0	5
GSVE	53	0	2	51	0	0	0	0	0
Tested as of 2/23/20					2/24/21-3/2/21				
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, resident mass testing or staff testing done as part of any pre-op procedures.

Mass Resident Testing

Mass Resident Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	0	0	22 pending from last report were negative	0
GSVE	30	0	30	0
Chase	0	0	0	0

NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 2/24/21-3/2/21:

Mass Staff Testing

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	332	0	332 tested in current testing week all neg; additional 339 that were pending are also negative*	0
GSVE	270	2 repeat positives	268	0
Chase	143	0	143 and an additional 73 that were pending but not previously reported as such were all neg*	0

*Note: due to recent weather related delays we experienced an unprecedented number of pending tests for longer than normal. There are no further pending results.

Staff Testing 2/24/21-3/2/21

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

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results

GSVE: No new positive test results

Resident Testing 2/24/21-3/2/21: Please note the narrative below includes **all positive test results**, including results of required resident mass testing. Therefore it may not correspond with the table above, which represents only those tested for cause.

GSFH: No new positive test results

Chase: No new positive test results.

GSVE: No new positive tests results.

COVID related Deaths 2/24/21-3/2/21

GSFH: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSFH.

Chase: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at Chase.

GSVE: We are happy to report there were no COVID-19 related resident deaths at GSVE.

Vaccination

- SNF and ACF

- At this point, all three of our campuses have had their first and second vaccine clinics for staff and residents. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE), NYS through the local health department will supply vaccines for new residents, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines. Chenango County (Chase) should be added to this program in the coming weeks.
- **Independent Living**
 - **The Medicine Shoppe, our Long Term Care Pharmacy has offered clinics for our IL residents.**
 - GSFH: Friday 1/22/21. All apartment residents who elected to receive the vaccine received the vaccine.
 - GSVE: **Great news: The second round of vaccines were administered last Friday (2/26/21),** and an additional 27 IL residents received their first dose. Their next dose will be scheduled in 4 weeks. There is no cost for the vaccine.
 - NYS residents over 65 or with certain underlying conditions are also eligible to be vaccinated at other sites. To explore eligibility, available sites and learn how to schedule an appointment, access this link: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>
- **Staff**
 - The federal program which supplied vaccines for staff is ending, and we are transitioning into a new phase of the staff vaccination program. In Broome County (GSFH and GSVE), NYS through the local health department will supply vaccines for new staff or staff who had previously declined the vaccine, and we are partnering with our Long Term Care pharmacy, the Medicine Shoppe, to administer these vaccines. Chenango County (Chase) should be added to this program in the coming weeks.
 - We continue to educate our employees on the vaccines effectiveness and safety record, and to advocate for our employees to help protect themselves and our residents by being vaccinated. There will be no cost to employees for this vaccination.

While this is not mandatory for our residents or staff, **we are hoping all of our eligible residents and staff will elect to be vaccinated unless there are contraindications.**

NYS Mandated Staff Testing

Per NYS, full-time staff are required to be tested twice per week for COVID-19, and those who do not meet the hours requirement must be tested once per week. As the positivity rate in NYS and in our area declines, we anticipate this being reduced to once per week.

Furloughed Staff

While we our facilities continue to provide quality care to all of our residents, we want to be completely transparent about some of the challenges we are facing. Each campus has had and continues to have employees who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or have had close contacts, and are therefore furloughed for a minimum of 14 days. This will obviously create staffing challenges. The following summarizes the currently furloughed staff members at each facility:

Furloughed Staff					
	Nursing	Env Service	Dietary	ACF	Other
GSFH	0	1	0	0	0
GSVE	0	0	0	0	1
Chase	1	0	0	0	0

NYS Visitation Guidance

The state has issued new guidance, which went into place on Friday, February 26.

NYSDOH will focus on the county's COVID-19 rate of transmission to determine if nursing home visitation is allowed and if visitors will need to be tested for COVID-19 prior to the visit. The county positivity rate is based on CMS data, rather than NYS generated data. If a visitor tests positive, they will not be allowed to visit.

- County COVID-19 transmission rate less than 5% (CMS rates) - no COVID-19 test required but encouraged by NYSDOH prior to visiting.
- County COVID-19 transmission rate between 5% and 10% (CMS Rates)- must be tested for COVID-19 within 72 hours of the visit. Can be a PCR or rapid test, NYSDOH will provide rapid tests to the nursing homes at no cost.
- County COVID-19 transmission rate greater than 10% (CMS rates)- no visitation allowed except for compassionate care.
- Individuals vaccinated no less than 14 days before the date of the visit and no more than 90 days prior to the visit can provide proof of vaccination in lieu of testing.
- Required tests must be completed within 72 hours prior to the scheduled visit. You can opt to pursue testing in the community prior to the visit: either a PCR or Rapid Antigen test is acceptable.
- You may also choose to be tested at the facility by appointment only (walk-ins are not allowed) Tests must be scheduled within the 72 hours prior to the scheduled visit. Testing at the facility is completed using a Rapid Antigen test via a monitored, self-collected nasal swab. Results are available within 15-30 minutes. Facility testing is currently free of charge. If a visitor tests positive during a facility Rapid Antigen being performed, the visitor will be informed, the visit will not move forward, and the visitor will be directed to contact their community provider for any additional follow-up. All Rapid Antigen test results that have been performed at the facility are required to be reported to the NYS DOH whether it is negative or positive.

Our facilities have determined that we will require a COVID-19 negative test even when the county rate is less than 5%. Appointments for rapid COVID-19 testing must be made in advance in accordance with each facility’s policy.

We are disappointed that the new guidance continues to require visitation to pause if there has been a positive case of COVID-19 within 14 days. We continue to work with our association to encourage NYS to adopt more liberal guidelines.

Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

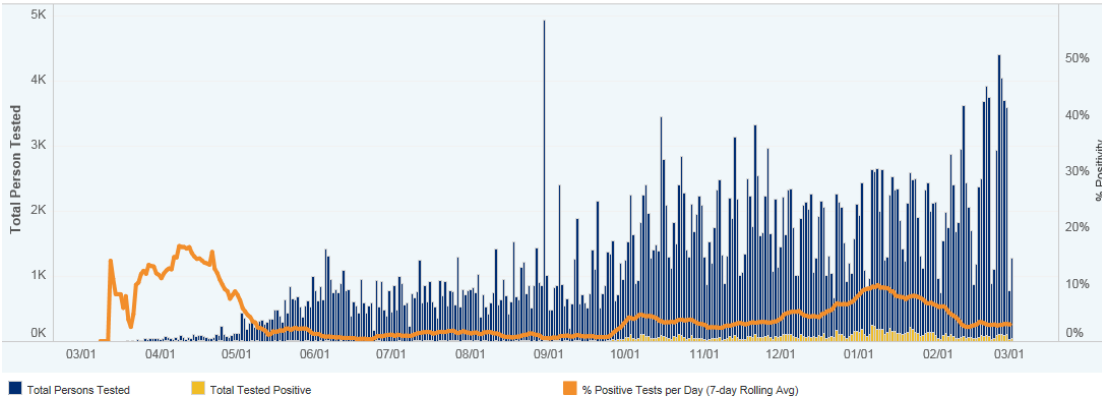
NYS reports on COVID Positivity Rates by County and also on COVID Cluster Spots. Each week, we will include the most recent info. Increasing positivity can impact all businesses. Per CMS guidelines:

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals Vary by Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

***This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.**

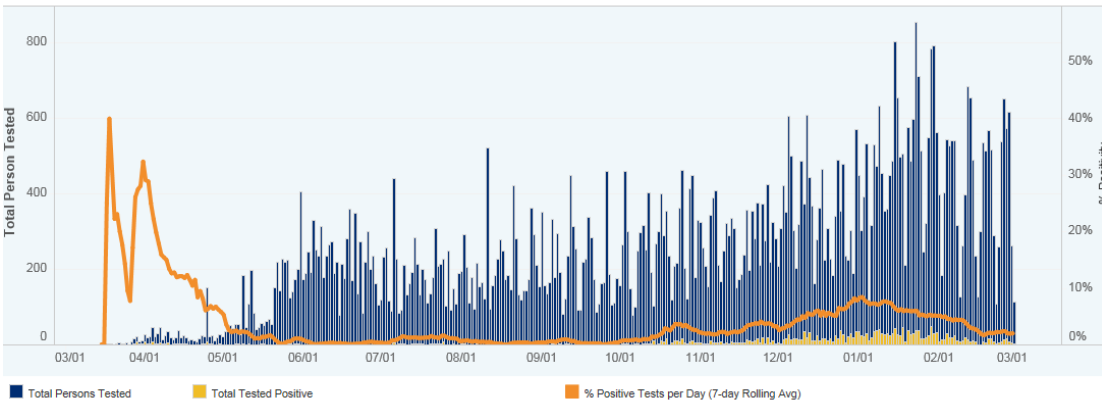
% Positive Results Over Time - Broome



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	1,232	43	3.5%	3.0%

% Positive Results Over Time - Chenango



Test Results - Yesterday

		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Chenango	109	4	3.7%	2.0%

Currently, none of our facilities are in a COVID-19 cluster hot spot.

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: The GSFH SNF and ACF (ALR and ALP), Chase SNF, and GSVE ALR are currently open for visitation. GSVE SNF cannot open until 3/9/21 at the earliest.

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. 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 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

- No new donations were received.

Please remember to contact the facility's Administrator prior to making a non-monetary 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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