



March 10, 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-19 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	Employees Negative
Chase	22	0	4	18	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	Residents Negative	Residents Negative
Chase	25	0	2	23	10	0	0	0	10
GSFH	119	0	12	107	5	0	0	0	5
GSVE	53	0	2	51	5	0	0	0	5
Tested as of 3/2/21					3/3/21-3/9/21				
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	0	0
GSVE	0	0	0	0
Chase	0	0	0	0

**NYS DOH Mandatory Testing for all Staff: Results of week of 3/3/21-3/9/21:**

**Mass Staff Testing**

Mass Employee Testing				
	Tested	Positive	Negative	Pending, Inconclusive or Indeterminate
GSFH	319	0	319	0
GSVE	275	0	274	1
Chase	134	1 repeat	104	29

### **Staff Testing 3/3/21-3/9/21**

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 3/3/21-3/9/21:** 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 3/3/21-3/9/21**

*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 2/26/21**, and an additional 27 IL residents received their first dose. Their next dose will be scheduled in four 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.**

**Who is eligible to be vaccinated in NYS: *Please note that as of today, NYS has lowered the age threshold from 65 to 60.***

**Eligible New Yorkers In Phase 1a and 1b are:**

- Individuals Age 65 and older who reside in New York
- First Responder or Support Staff for First Responder Agency
- Fire
  - State Fire Service, including firefighters and investigators (professional and volunteer)
  - Local Fire Service, including firefighters and investigators (professional and volunteer)
- Police and Investigations
  - State Police, including Troopers
  - State Park Police, DEC Police, Forest Rangers
  - SUNY Police
  - Sheriffs' Offices
  - County Police Departments and Police Districts
  - City, Town, and Village Police Departments
  - Transit of other Public Authority Police Departments
  - State Field Investigations, including DMV, SCOC, Justice Center, DFS, IG, Tax, OCFS, SLA
- Public Safety Communications
  - Emergency Communication and PSAP Personnel, including dispatchers and technicians
- Other Sworn and Civilian Personnel
  - Court Officer
  - Other Police or Peace Officer
  - Support or Civilian Staff for Any of the Above Services, Agencies, or Facilities
- Corrections
  - State DOCCS Personnel, including correction and parole officers
  - Local Correctional Facilities, including correction officers
  - Local Probation Departments, including probation officers
  - State Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities
  - Local Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities
- P-12 Schools
  - P-12 school (public or non-public) or school district faculty or staff (includes all teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, school administrators, paraprofessional staff, and support staff including bus drivers)
  - Contractor working in a P-12 school or school district (including contracted bus drivers)
  - Licensed, registered, approved or legally exempt group childcare
- In-person college faculty and instructors
- Employees or Support Staff of licensed, registered, approved or legally exempt group Childcare Setting
- Licensed, registered, approved or legally exempt group Childcare Provider

- Public Transit
  - Airline and airport employee
  - Passenger railroad employee
  - Subway and mass transit employee (i.e., MTA, LIRR, Metro North, NYC Transit, Upstate transit)
  - Ferry employee
  - Port Authority employee
  - Public bus employee
- Public facing grocery store workers, including convenience stores, bodegas, regional food banks, food pantries and permitted home-delivered meal programs
- Individual living in a homeless shelter where sleeping, bathing or eating accommodations must be shared with individuals and families who are not part of your household
- Individual working (paid or unpaid) in a homeless shelter where sleeping, bathing or eating accommodations must be shared by individuals and families who are not part of the same household, in a position where there is potential for interaction with shelter residents
- High-risk hospital and FQHC staff, including OMH psychiatric centers
- Health care or other high-risk essential staff who come into contact with residents/patients working in LTCFs and long-term, congregate settings overseen by OPWDD, OMH, OCFS, OTDA and OASAS, and residents in congregate living situations, overseen or funded by the OPWDD, OMH, OCFS, OTDA and OASAS
- Certified NYS EMS provider, including but not limited to Certified First Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, Emergency Medical Technician – Critical Care, Paramedic, Ambulance Emergency Vehicle Operator, or Non-Certified Ambulance Assistant
- County Coroner or Medical Examiner, or employer or contractor thereof who is exposed to infectious material or bodily fluids
- Licensed funeral director, or owner, operator, employee, or contractor of a funeral firm licensed and registered in New York State, who is exposed to infectious material or bodily fluids
- Staff of urgent care provider
- Staff who administer COVID-19 vaccine
- All Outpatient/Ambulatory front-line, high-risk health care workers of any age who provide direct in-person patient care, or other staff in a position in which they have direct contact with patients (i.e., intake staff)
- All front-line, high-risk public health workers who have direct contact with patients, including those conducting COVID-19 tests, handling COVID-19 specimens and COVID-19 vaccinations
- Home care workers and aides, hospice workers, personal care aides, and consumer-directed personal care workers
- Staff and residents of nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, and adult care facilities
- Restaurant employees, including workers in permitted soup kitchen and congregate meal programs\*
- Restaurant delivery workers\*
- Public facing hotel workers\*
- For-hire vehicle drivers, including taxi, livery, black car, and transportation network company drivers\*

\*Eligible for vaccination at State-operated mass vaccination sites, and, at the option of local health departments (LHDs) at LHD-operated point of distribution sites.



Department  
of Health

## Comorbidities for COVID-19 Eligibility in New York State

*Effective February 14, 2021*

- Cancer (current or in remission, including 9/11-related cancers)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Pulmonary Disease, including but not limited to, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), asthma (moderate-to-severe), pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis, and 9/11 related pulmonary diseases
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities including Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, including but not limited to heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies, or hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) including but not limited to solid organ transplant or from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, use of other immune weakening medicines, or other causes
- Severe Obesity (BMI 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher but < 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease or Thalassemia
- Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Neurologic conditions including but not limited to Alzheimer's Disease or dementia
- Liver disease

## NYS Increases Indoor Dining Capacity Starting March 19 (outside of NYC)

*Restaurants outside of NYC can increase indoor dining capacity to 75%*

On March 7, Governor Cuomo announced that all restaurants outside of New York City can increase indoor dining capacity to 75% on March 19. All guidance from the Phase 3 Indoor Dining guidelines still apply, including 6 feet spacing. As a reminder, barriers of 5 ft. in height may be used in place of the distancing, which could help restaurants reach 75% capacity. Good Shepherd is reviewing this new guidance to determine how best to expand our dining venue's capacity.

## 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 create staffing challenges, but at least the situation is improving with fewer employees furloughed than at the height of the local outbreaks. The following summarizes the currently furloughed staff members at each facility:

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

## NYS Visitation Guidance

The state 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 testing must be made in advance in accordance with each facility’s policy. **Vaccination status will not change this requirement at this time, but we will review this policy as CDC and NYS guidance evolves.**

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.

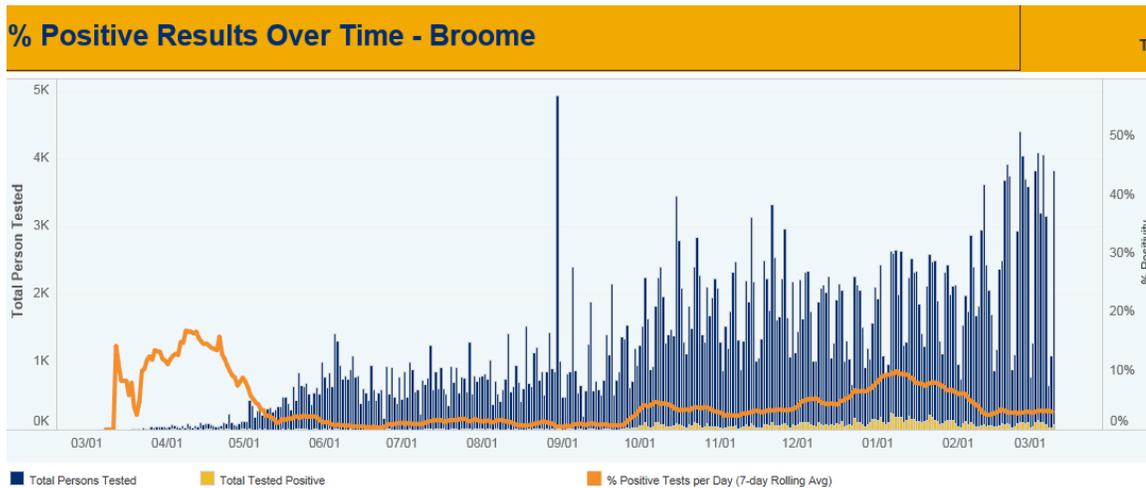
### Positivity Rates and COVID Zones

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**

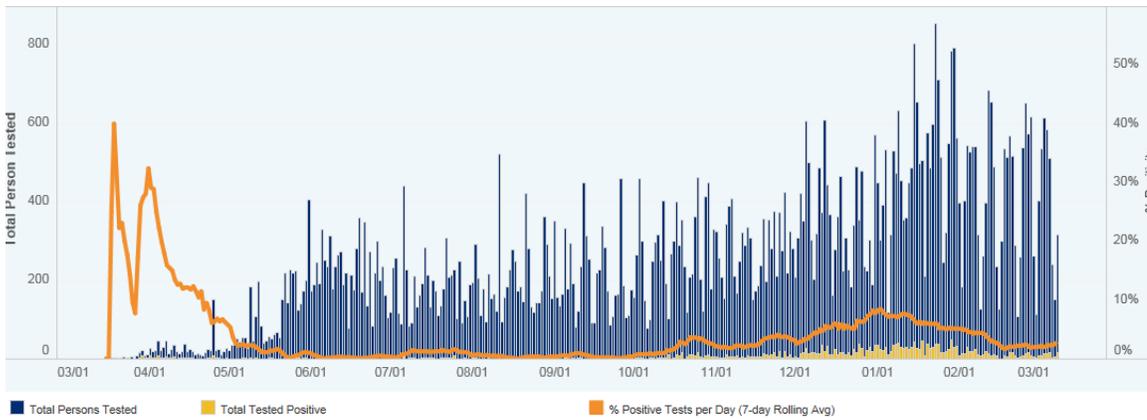
Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

\*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.



Test Results - Yesterday		Total Persons Tested	Total Tested Positive	% Positive, Yesterday	% Positive, 7-day Avg
Southern Tier	Broome	3,741	84	2.2%	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	300	17	5.7%	2.6%

Currently, none of our facilities are in a COVID 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: All Levels of Care at all of our campuses are now open for visitation.**

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

- Stephanie Dye, Rehab Coordinator and Girl Scout Troop #30562 donated boxes of Girl Scout cookies to GSFH Therapeutic Recreation Department for use during our Girl Scout theme week.
- Weis on Robinson Street, Binghamton, donated flowers for GSFH Apartment Resident Madeline Villanti's 105<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration.

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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