



January 26, 2021

As January comes to a close, we are celebrating the closing of our COVID-19 Unit. This is a huge relief to our residents and staff, but with it also comes many emotions. We finally feel like we are settling back in to a routine, and our residents are settling back into their rooms. We continue to test residents and staff twice a week. We have gone several days now with no new identified cases of COVID-19. By Thursday of this week, we could potentially be out of Outbreak Testing. This is encouraging news which will allow us to re-initiate some valuable programming. Once we are out of outbreak testing, we will be able to begin small group activities, re-implement ancillary services, and open our Beauty Shop. Perhaps what our residents are most excited for is the return of our Sweet Shoppe wandering snack cart!

In other good news, all other ancillaries (podiatry, audiology, vision and dental) will be scheduled to resume in February. These providers have all participated in COVID-19 Vaccination clinics for healthcare practitioners and we are grateful to be resuming these services. Many of our out of building appointments will continue to remain virtual appointments unless the provider requests an in person visit for assessment purposes.

Our second vaccination clinic was completed on January 19. All residents who were eligible and had consents signed received the vaccination. We had an increase in staff participation in this clinic as well. Our final vaccination clinic is scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup> to complete the vaccinations for anyone who received their first dose in January. We are still awaiting guidance from local and state officials on the process for ongoing vaccination at the facility level. This will impact those residents who received the COVID-19 Antibody Infusion and any new admissions. As soon as we have direction and have established our process, we will share the details with you.

What does the vaccination mean for facility operations? We get this question a lot. Right now, it really does not mean anything different as far as the rules and regulations apply. It does mean that those who have been vaccinated have the antibodies to protect them against the virus. It means that as we slowly open up and resume small group activities that our residents are protected from the wrath of the virus. This is all good. It does not change our reliance on personal protective equipment, or the need for daily symptom screening. Until we achieve a much higher level of community vaccination, we will still be required to follow the visitation restrictions established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Ohio Department of Health. We will get there – and we will celebrate the day we can throw the doors open and welcome you all in! Right now, due to Lorain County's high positivity rate, we are still unable to offer inside visitation. We have accommodated several compassionate care visits and we will continue to do so especially while scheduled inside visitation remains on hold. In the meantime, we want to commend you all for your patience and support over these last very long 11 months. COVID-

19 has impacted all of our lives, and our team has really struggled emotionally with the significant impact COVID has had on our residents. Your words of encouragement, thank you's and support have truly been an uplifting force for our team and we wanted you to know how touched we have been.

As a reminder, all of our COVID-19 data is posted on our website under the COVID-19 link at [www.welcomenursinghome.com](http://www.welcomenursinghome.com). Below the statistics are the links to all of the prior Resident and Family letters that have been sent. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the social services department who can facilitate connecting you with the proper department.

On a more uplifting note, we have a request from our Activities Department! Valentine's Day is fast approaching and the residents will be decorating Valentine Bags for their doors. Every year our staff deliver Valentine's to the residents. This year, we wanted to extend the tradition to our families! If you would like to send in a Valentine to someone special, or all the residents we would love to deliver them for you. Send them to the *Care Of: The Activities Department* and we will make sure your Valentine receives your letter. We are excited to share that a local Girl Scout Troop has joined in on our fun and will be sending in notes as well as our lovely pen pal from Atlanta Hilary!

Stay Well and we hope to see you soon!

Heidi J. W. Freas MS OTR/L

Director of Quality Assurance