



September 1, 2020

Dear Residents and Families:

Over the last few weeks there has been a barrage of additional guidance and regulatory direction. The challenge lies in the fact that our state and federal guidance are not always consistent, and often conflict with one another. The most significant change in our direction has been in baseline and routine testing of skilled nursing home employees and contract staff. As of tomorrow, Welcome will be required to test our staff on a weekly basis due to the positivity rate recorded in Lorain County (this number was provided by the Federal Government and does not reflect information provided publicly through the Ohio Department of Health). This rate will be updated every other Monday and may result in us testing more or less frequently.

At this time, we are working with Quest, a laboratory we were assigned to work with by the Ohio Department of Health. We receive our results back in approximately 5-6 days. The Federal government will eventually be providing us with a different antigen test kit we can complete internally which will get us results in under 20 minutes. Until we have received our testing kit, we will continue to rely on our laboratory partners in the community. A significant change in the most recent guidance does impact our residents. If we receive one positive employee test, we are required to do "outbreak" testing every 3-7 days. Outbreak testing includes testing all residents and staff. Until now, testing of residents was limited to those who were symptomatic, who may have had a close contact exposure, or required a pre-procedure test to be completed.

Due to the frequency of testing and the rising state numbers, we want to be fully prepared in the event that we have a positive test result. I have included with this email, a COVID-19 Consent form we would like to have filled out and returned to the facility as soon as possible. We certainly hope that we never need to implement our Outbreak Policy, but we know preparation and planning is critical to limiting exposure and maintaining quality care through these challenging times.

Please return the attached Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resident/Staff Testing Consent form as soon as you are able. We will have copies available at the Receptionist Desk or we are happy to mail you a copy if you are unable to print the form at home. Feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or concerns regarding the form or our testing process.

Stay Well,

Heidi J. W. Freas MS OTR/L
Vice President
Director of Quality Assurance