



September 18, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Friends,

Just as we got into the swing of having outdoor visits, the cool air has swept in and fall is certainly in the air. We have enjoyed hosting you all for family time and we appreciate your cooperation with following the guidelines implemented to keep everyone safe. Scheduled outside visits will continue as long as the weather cooperates. Please make sure you schedule through the receptionist or activities department. Ohioans have always been a hearty type, but we know the cold weather is not too far off. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provided facilities with expanded Visitation Guidelines today. We anticipate the Ohio Department of Health will weigh in on these new guidelines and we should be receiving direction from them within the next week. Once we have had time to digest the new guidelines, we will be modifying our visitation policy to include scheduled indoor visits. Many of the expectations will remain the same: COVID-19 Screening, social distancing, restricted number of visitors, use of face masks, etc. There will be some additional requirements added once the visits are moved indoors. As this evolves, we will communicate with you the direction we are taking. As always, the safety and well being of our residents is paramount. We have taken a strong, aggressive approach to mitigating the risk of this pandemic, and we fully intend on maintaining the highest degree of safety as we move forward.

As hesitant and concerned as we are for opening our doors, we also fully recognize the value of an embrace, the importance of a hug, and we know quality of life must also be forefront in our minds as we make decisions on behalf of our residents and families. In the meantime, our team is bustling to prepare for this next phase of re-opening. Many of our common spaces have been converted into Personal Protective Equipment storage rooms, our atrium now houses beds that were removed from our quarantine unit, our conference room was quickly turned into the incident command center. We are hoping to reorganize ourselves yet again, so we can create an indoor space that is spacious, inviting, and yet provides privacy for your visitation.

In our anticipation of receiving the Re-Opening Guidance, we have secured additional PPE in order to have substantial equipment to provide to staff, residents, and now visitors. We have purchased mobile Electrostatic Air Purifier that is currently in use on Avenue Q, but can be utilized in the future for our visitation location. We have also added ultraviolet air purification to our HVAC roof top systems that are constantly running fresh outside air throughout the facility.

I have received many questions regarding the testing guidelines for employees, residents and visitors. Right now, the state of Ohio requires skilled nursing facilities to test all staff and direct care contractors every other week. The Federal government requires facilities to test employees based on a positivity rate that is updated on a weekly basis. The positivity rate determines if we test weekly, or monthly. Federally, we are required to also test anyone who enters the building to provide goods, services, or repairs on behalf of the residents. In addition to ongoing baseline testing, the Federal mandate requires any facility with one or more positive cases to test all residents and staff every 3-7 days until there have been no new positive cases identified for 14 days. The Federal visitation guidance does not require us to test visitors, but recommends it based on the county positivity rate.

CMS has also provided Welcome with a point of care (POC) testing machine. It is similar to a blood sugar machine. We have a small hand-held unit that can process the nasal swab in the facility within fifteen minutes. We intend to use the POC testing for residents in the event that we are faced with completing outbreak testing. This will allow us to have

results quickly so we are able to implement isolation precautions to minimize spread as quickly as possible. Please remember to complete the consent form for COVID-19 testing so we are prepared.

As for what has been going on within our halls...we have continued to provide small group activities and small communal dining in satellite locations. The pandemic has certainly taken its toll. We have always prided ourselves in having an outstanding longevity rate, regularly celebrating over a hundred years of service at our annual Employee Recognition Celebration. Understandably, many of our long-term employees have chosen to retire during the last 6 months. This has been an additional challenge on our administrative team. Our leadership team continues to amaze me and meets any challenge with grace and an attitude of positivity. This certainly has not been the 75th Anniversary full of parties and celebrations that we had envisioned. However, our dedicated team of employees continues to prove that "People Helping People" is much more than a business motto.

Again, I want to thank you for your continued trust in our care and services. It is an honor to be caring for your loved ones during these unprecedented times. This letter, as well as all previous letters will be uploaded to our website with other COVID-19 resources at www.welcomenursinghome.com. Any changes to our COVID-19 facility positivity rate will also be found under the COVID-19 Updates tab on our website. As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Stay Well,

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