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Providing Specialized Nursing  
& Advanced Pulmonary Care

## **Weekly Family-Guardian Communication**

**...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team – 1/8/2021**

In our effort to maintain open and honest communication, we will continue to provide you with updates about all Respiratory Viral Outbreaks and the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We hope you find this information helpful.

### **Resident Update**

All of our Residents have returned to their typical state of health. Our Resident that tested positive for COVID-19 did not have any signs or symptoms of illness and has returned from the hospital. No additional Residents have been diagnosed with the Rhino-Enteroviruses although we remain in a declared outbreak status determined by the NJ Department of Health (DOH).

### **Staff Update**

We have seven Staff Members that have tested positive for COVID-19 via our testing. Of the seven, five provided direct care to our Residents and were not showing any signs or symptoms of illness. Nursing contacted all Family-Guardians by phone if their child was cared for by our Staff that tested positive. Also testing positive was a contract employee that did not have any Resident or Staff contact.

### **Resident/Staff COVID-19 Testing**

Following The NJ DOH guidance, we continue to test our Residents weekly and testing all of our Staff two times per week. This is required due to the high community positivity rate of COVID-19 for our area which is over 10%. We remain in an outbreak status declared by the NJ DOH due to our positive cases. This will continue until further notice. We also, recently completed the pilot program required by NJ DOH mandating testing of our Staff via rapid testing three times per week.

### **Visitation**

Since we have positive cases of COVID-19, Family-Guardian indoor visitation per NJ DOH Executive Directive 20-025 specific to Pediatric and Residents of Adult Long Term Care Facilities with Developmental Disabilities is delayed. We must be COVID-19 free and no longer conducting outbreak testing (details explained in Phased Reopening section). Concerning Outdoor Visitation, due to the cold weather, season change we are no longer scheduling this visitation. Video Visitation continues to be available via Skype, Zoom or FaceTime. We encourage you to contact your VPF Social Worker to help arrange this.

### **Continued over**

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### **Phased Reopening**

The NJ DOH recently revised Executive Directive No. 20-026, which establishes mandatory procedures that Long Term Care facilities must meet in order to safely reopen to ALL visitors and resume normal operations. The phased reopening follows the NJ State Reopening Plan and is based on the following criteria: the rate of community transmission of COVID-19, a Facility's outbreak status and ability to test Staff and Residents as well as maintain Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices, have appropriate Staffing and Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE). When facilities are COVID-19 free for 14 days AND no longer conducting outbreak testing, they may restore services in phases, starting with indoor visitation for Resident Family-Guardians. Strict guidelines must be followed in all phases outlined in the Executive Directive to ensure a safe reopening. Since we have positive cases of COVID-19 and are conducting outbreak testing, Family/Guardian indoor visitation is delayed until further notice. A limited, special circumstance indoor visitation defined as "Compassionate Care Visitation" is also included in this Directive following strict guidelines during all phases of a Facility's reopening. For VPF, indoor visitation will be considered for newly admitted Residents and Residents and their Family-Guardians experiencing extreme emotional distress. Our Medical Staff, Director of Nursing, Nurse Managers/Supervisors and Social Workers coordinate this specialized visitation scheduled by appointment only on a limited basis. Indoor visitation for End of Life Care is an exception in this Directive and will be supported as needed at any time. Please contact your VPF Social Worker for more information. As a friendly reminder, Family-Guardians can now launder their child's clothing and linens. Please contact your VPF Social Worker or Nursing Supervisor if interested.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

We are partnering with Walgreens Pharmacy and providing vaccination clinics at VPF for Staff and Residents age 16 years and older for the FDA approved Pfizer vaccine. We are in the process of contacting all Family-Guardians of our eligible Residents to discuss and obtain consent for the vaccine. Detailed information was mailed to our eligible Resident Family-Guardians for review. Our first Clinic is scheduled for Wednesday January 13.

### **Our Commitment**

Resident and Staff wellness and safety is our top priority. Please be reassured we continue to follow all core standards of Infection Prevention and Control measures partnering with the NJ DOH to maintain wellness. Our commitment is verified again during another unannounced visit, an Infection Prevention and Control focused Survey on 11/13 by the NJ DOH. We are happy to report that we are in full compliance with all of the federal and state rules, guidelines and standards of care specific to Infection Prevention and Control.

### **Our Appreciation**

The strength and courage our Family-Guardians continue to demonstrate as we all work through this pandemic is heroic. A heartfelt thank you for your continued patience, support and trust in us.

### **Important Reminder: Flu Season**

We encourage our Family-Guardians to receive a yearly flu vaccine to help keep us all well especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of NJ requires all individuals employed in any NJ Healthcare Facility receive a yearly flu vaccine unless they have a medical exemption from a healthcare provider. We are in the process of providing the vaccine to our Staff. All of our Residents with Family-Guardian permission have received the flu vaccine.

Be well.