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Providing Specialized Nursing  
& Advanced Pulmonary Care

### **Weekly Family-Guardian Communication**

**...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team – 3/11/2021**

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**

We have not had any new cases of the Rhino-Entero viruses. The NJ Department of Health (DOH) may declare this outbreak over next week if no new cases are identified. We will keep you updated. One of our Residents has tested positive for COVID-19. The Resident is not showing any signs or symptoms of illness and as a precaution was transferred to the Hospital for close monitoring. No other Resident or Staff Member is effected by this. Contact tracing could not identify the source of this exposure. Our outbreak status continues and is extended as a result of this positive case.

#### **Staff Update**

Our Staff Member that previously tested COVID-19 positive remains well and will be returning to work.

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

Following The NJ DOH guidance, since we have a positive Staff Member and Resident, outbreak testing must be conducted weekly for all Residents. This will continue until further notice. We continue to provide weekly routine Staff testing.

#### **Visitation**

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) recently updated their visitation guidance for Long Term Care Facilities. We have been notified that we must continue to follow the visitation guidance issued by the NJ DOH Commissioner in Executive Directive (ED) 20-026 (see Phased Reopening section). We are not permitted to change our practices, policy or procedures at this time. The DOH is working on revising the visitation guidelines of the Executive Directive and will notify us. We will keep you updated. The NJ DOH ED 20-025 issued prior to ED 20-026 specific to indoor visitation of Pediatric and Residents of Adult Long Term Care Facilities with Developmental Disabilities continues to be delayed due to our positive cases. We must be COVID-19 free for 28 days and no longer conducting outbreak testing. Outdoor Visitation is no longer being scheduled due to the cold weather. 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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### **NJ DOH Phased Reopening Executive Directive for Long Term Care Facilities**

The NJ DOH issued ED 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. Guidelines for indoor visitation are outlined. Following guidance from CMS and the Center of Disease Control (CDC) our phased reopening is directed by the NJ State Reopening Plan. It is based on the following criteria: the rate of community transmission of COVID-19, a Facility's outbreak status and a facility's ability to maintain core Infection Prevention and Control Practices such as conductive COVID-19 testing of Staff/Residents, have appropriate Staffing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When facilities are COVID-19 free for 14 days AND no longer conducting outbreak testing, facilities may restore services in phases such as supervised indoor socially distanced visitation for Resident Family-Guardians by appointment. Visitors must consent to COVID-19 testing, wear full PPE and have no physical contact with the Resident, Staff or other Residents of the facility. Strict guidelines must be followed in all phases outlined in the Executive Directive to ensure a safe reopening. Since we have positive Staff and Resident cases AND are conducting Resident 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 and may occur in all phases of a Facility's reopening. For VPF, Compassionate Care visitation is available for newly admitted Residents and all Residents and their Family-Guardians experiencing 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. 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 about visitation. As a friendly reminder, Family-Guardians can launder their child's clothing and linens. Please contact your VPF Social Worker or Nursing Supervisor if interested.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

We hosted our third Vaccine Clinic onsite February 24 partnering with Walgreens Pharmacy with great success! This vaccine is not mandatory to receive although highly recommended for all individuals to prevent the community spread of COVID-19 especially for individuals with chronic health issues and for all health care workers. Our Residents age 16 and older with Family-Guardian permission have received the vaccine along our Staff. The vaccine is now available at various sites in the community. A NJ State toll free phone Hotline can be contacted at 855-568-0545 to assist NJ Residents with general questions about the vaccines, eligibility and location of vaccination sites or visit the NJ Hub Website: [covid19.nj.gov](https://www.covid19.nj.gov).

### **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. It is not too late! 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.