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Providing Specialized Nursing  
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### **Weekly Family-Guardian Communication**

**...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team – 3/19/2021**

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 2 Residents newly diagnosed with the Rhino-Entero (R-E) viruses and a few Residents with R-E like symptoms. The R-E viruses are common upper respiratory viruses that circulate in the community this time of year. Symptoms can include fever, runny nose, wheezing, vomiting and diarrhea. Please be reassured we are in contact with the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) and taking all necessary steps to control the spread of this virus. We remain in an outbreak status with the R-E viruses.

#### **Staff Update**

We have one newly confirmed case of COVID-19 via our weekly testing with an outside contractor's employee that works on-site. The individual is not having any signs or symptoms and did not have contact with our Residents.

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

Following The NJ DOH guidance, since we have positive COVID-19 cases, Resident testing will continue weekly. Routine weekly testing also continues for all Staff. We remain in an outbreak status of COVID-19. This will continue until further notice, direction from The NJDOH.

#### **Visitation**

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 for 28 days and no longer conducting outbreak testing (details explained in Phased Reopening section). Outdoor Visitation is no longer being scheduled due to the cold weather. We plan to offer Outdoor Visitation when the warm weather of spring arrives. Video Visitation continues to be available via Skype, Zoom or FaceTime. We encourage you to contact your VPF Social Worker to help arrange this.

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### **Phased Reopening**

The NJ DOH issued 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. Following mandates from the Center of Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), Science and the Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidance, the phased reopening follows 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, ability to COVID-19 test Staff/Residents, maintain core Infection Prevention and Control Practices, 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 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 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. At VPF, Compassionate Care visitation is available for newly admitted Residents and 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 three Vaccine Clinics onsite partnering with Walgreens Pharmacy for our Residents and Staff with success. Although the vaccine is not mandatory to receive it is highly recommended for all to prevent the spread of COVID-19 especially for individuals with chronic health issues and health care workers. Our Residents age 16 and older with Family-Guardian permission have received the vaccine. The vaccine is now available at various sites in the community. A NJ State toll free 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://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. We respect and appreciate our partnership with you.

### **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. All of eligible Staff and Residents with Family-Guardian permission have received the flu vaccine.

Be well.