



1304 Laurel Oak Rd
Voorhees, NJ 08043
P: 856.346.3300
F: 856.435.4223

Providing Specialized Nursing
& Advanced Pulmonary Care

Weekly Family-Guardian Communication

...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team-1/21/2022

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

Resident Update

Three Residents have tested positive for COVID-19 during this week's testing. Nursing has contacted all Family-Guardians directly if their child is affected by this. Our Residents previously testing positive are stable, in their typical states of health.

Staff Update

Ten Staff Members have tested positive via our weekly testing or external testing and are home on quarantine. A majority of the Staff previously testing positive have returned to work.

Resident/Staff COVID-19 Testing

To best protect our Residents and Staff we are testing ALL STAFF two times per week due to the high rate of transmission of the virus. Weekly Resident testing will continue until further notice as directed by the NJ DOH. We remain in a COVID-19 outbreak status.

Visitation

Indoor visitation is available by appointment only, seven days per week at specific times and locations of VPF. We continue to follow all necessary infection prevention and control measures and guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and The NJ DOH working toward a safe reopening for all of our Residents, Families and Staff Members. The challenge for us is maintaining the safety and health of our Residents. Half of our pediatric medically fragile Residents are not vaccinated or fully vaccinated at this time and require ongoing medical monitoring. Most of the federal and state guidance, directives, do not take into account the special needs of our pediatric population. When our Residents and Families are fully vaccinated they may have more opportunity and freedom to participate in a variety of unrestricted events and activities. **We highly encourage our Families to consider vaccination for all Family Members age 5 and older and receive a booster shot if eligible!**

Video visitation continues to be available for our Families via Facetime and Zoom. Please contact a VPF Nursing Supervisor or Social Work for more information and to schedule an appointment for visitation with your child.

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Reopening of Long Term Care Facilities

The CMS and The NJ DOH recently revised Regulations, Guidance QSO-20-39-NH and Executive Directive 21-012 specific to the visitation of Residents residing in certified long term care facilities. We have carefully reviewed the revisions and have developed new visitation guidelines about how to safely accommodate visitation for our highly complex and medically fragile Pediatric Resident population. We have updated you about some of the changes via our instant messaging system and as promised have enclosed our revised Visitation Guidelines in the mail with this update to all Family-Guardians.

COVID-19 Vaccine

The FDA has approved and the CDC recommends the Pfizer-BioTech vaccine for all children age 5 and older. We continue to offer the vaccine to all eligible Residents with Family-Guardian permission. **Although the vaccine is not mandatory to receive for our Residents and Family-Guardians, it is highly recommended for all individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19.** The vaccine is readily available at various sites in the community for all NJ Residents. A NJ State toll free Hotline can be contacted at 855-568-0545 to assist you with general questions about the vaccines, eligibility and location of vaccination sites or you can visit the NJ Hub Website: covid-19.nj.gov. **We highly encourage ALL to receive the vaccine and a booster!** If you or any of your family members that visit VPF have received the vaccine, we would appreciate a copy of your vaccine card to help us safely plan for your visitation. This is not a requirement for visitation. Recently, signed an Executive Directive requiring all health care workers to receive a booster vaccine. We will partner with a pharmacy and provide the vaccine at VPF for our Staff to receive the booster.

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. We are happy to report that we are in full compliance with all the federal and state rules, guidelines and standards of care specific to Infection Prevention and Control. Since the start of the pandemic we have had 5 deficiency free Infection Control Focused Surveys by the NJ DOH. On 10/22 we had an additional unannounced Infection Control Focused Survey by the NJ DOH and happy to report once again are in full compliance with all standards and regulations. Throughout the pandemic, our team has worked tirelessly to remain up to date on all current COVID-19 data and recommendations from science and medical experts to make the best decisions for our Residents, Families, Staff and Community. **Prior to the Federal and State mandate for Staff working in Long Term Care Facilities to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine, we decided to require that all of our Staff be fully vaccinated by October 15. We feel this is our responsibility to our community and a necessary step in ending this pandemic.**

Our Appreciation

A heartfelt thank you for your continued patience, support and trust in us. We respect and appreciate our partnership with you.

Important Communication Updates

Our automated Family-Guardian notification system is in place that is linked to our Electronic Medical Record. We are sending all medical appointments, facility outings and urgent messages from our automated system to your cell phone or landline. In the near future, other notifications we typically mail will be sent by email if you have an email address. We will continue to mail information for those without an email address.

It is **FLU SEASON!** We encourage our Residents and Family-Guardians to receive a yearly flu vaccine to help keep us 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 have provided the vaccine to all eligible Staff and Residents with Family-Guardian permission.

Be well.