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Providing Specialized Nursing  
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## Weekly Family-Guardian Communication

...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team-11/26/2021

*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**

We have several Residents that have been diagnosed with the Rhinovirus and Enterovirus which are typical respiratory viruses that circulate in the community this time of year. Symptoms can include: runny nose, fever, wheezing, vomiting or loose stools. Nursing has contacted all Resident Family-Guardians directly if their child was effected by this. Frequent hand washing and cleaning of high touch surfaces and remaining home when sick are the best ways to prevent the spread of these types of viruses.

### **Staff Update**

One Staff Member that previously tested positive for COVID-19 remains home on quarantine.

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

Weekly testing of all Staff and Residents continues as directed by The NJ DOH until further notice. We remain in an outbreak status as declared by the NJ DOH for COVID-19.

### **Compassionate Care 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 all 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 population are under the age of 12 and not eligible to be vaccinated at this time. Most of the newer guidance is about vaccination of Residents and Staff and permitted activities depending on the vaccination status. 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 12 and older.** Video visitation continues to be available for our Families via Skype, 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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### **Phased Reopening of Long Term Care Facilities**

Following the NJ State reopening plan and all of the guidance recommendations from The CDC and CMS, The NJ DOH is revising Executive Directive No. 20-206 that established mandatory procedures in order for us to safely reopen to **ALL** visitors and resume normal operations. We continue to comply with this Directive and all appropriate guidance and will communicate to our Family-Guardians any change. Although, The NJ State Government recently lifted "The State of Emergency" declared last March at the start of the pandemic the Executive Directives issued remain in effect for all NJ Long term Care Facilities until further notice. This is necessary to continue to protect and promote the safety and wellness of all individuals residing in long term care facilities. The CMS has recently revised visitation guidelines for all Medicare certified long term care facilities. We are carefully reviewing the revisions and also have been notified by The NJ DOH that Directives specific to the CMS revised visitation guidelines will be issued shortly. We will keep you updated.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

The FDA has recently approved and the CDC recommends the Pfizer-BioTech vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years. We will be contacting our Resident Family-Guardians of this age group to discuss administering the vaccine. **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](https://www.covid-19.nj.gov). **We highly encourage ALL to receive the vaccine!** 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.

### **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 that time of year- **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 started giving the vaccine to all VPF eligible Staff and Residents with Family-Guardian permission.

Be well.