

---

---

## COVID-19 UPDATE

---

---

**TO:** WESTMINSTER VILLAGE RESIDENTS  
**FROM:** BARB NATHAN  
**DATE:** MAY 29, 2020

It is such a relief to tell you each week that we remain virus free here at Westminster to the best of our knowledge. Today marks the movement to Phase 3 for the State of Illinois. This is a transition that we are happy for in some respects and yet very fearful because of it. Of course, as people begin gathering and moving around in the broader community, the risk for us increases. Yet it is an indication that there is a belief that if we practice safe social distancing and masking, we can minimize the risk.

For Skilled Care and Assisted Living the change to Phase 3 means nothing. There is no change in the current restrictions for the licensed areas. For Independent Living, the Beauty Shop will open next week adhering to the guidelines for personal care services. In addition, the Boutique will open next week, again adhering to guidelines for retail. The Boutique will only serve residents of Independent Living and staff; outside visitors will not be allowed nor residents from the licensed areas. The transportation service for Independent Living will begin providing trips to personal care services on June 8th. Personal Care Services are defined by the State as salons, massage services, nail salons and, in case any of you are interested, tattoo parlors (you need to laugh occasionally). In addition, we will continue our transportation for medical appointments and medical necessities. We ask that if you are going outside of Westminster, you continue to practice social distancing, that you wear a mask, and that you use hand sanitizer after touching surfaces in the community or leaving a facility. If you don't want to go out, we are here to help you meet the needs that you have outside Westminster Village. This is a time of increased diligence for all of us because again, as the community opens, risk increases.

Each week in the COVID update I discuss how we are focused on prevention, preparation, and compliance. I have written little about preparation, so I want to address that more fully today. One of the original hallways of Martin Health Center, the last one to be renovated, has been prepared as a place that individuals with COVID-19 could be isolated and well cared for. We have gone to the extent of having every single room stocked, placed isolation carts outside of each, and have new dividers. We are thankful we have not had to use this but if we need to, we are ready. Of course, the first and foremost question when someone is diagnosed is how they are physically. Can they be cared for here at Westminster, or would they need to be hospitalized? The hospitals all know of the preparations that we have put into place for a

completely isolated area. This is hugely important for being able to minimize transmission within a facility and we are so grateful we have the space to do this.

Yesterday we received an edict that we were expecting for many weeks. It called for testing of all residents in long term care and staff. A week ago, we heard that we would receive guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) this week about how to complete that testing. We did not receive guidance; we received an edict that was initially announced in a press conference with a timeframe of 14 days to have it planned. There was no guidance and there was no support provided. We of course always do the right thing and will comply with whatever is asked of us. The first thing we did was call our partner lab to ensure that they could acquire and reserve testing for us. We sent a communication to all staff so that as they heard this news, they knew we were on top of it. Last night, I sent a communication to Senator Bill Brady because while we are on top of this and committed to compliance, this is a horrible situation. In the news release from IDPH, it stated “we have to ensure that no facility is shirking its duties”. That statement from a State agency is a slap in the face to all that are working so hard to protect people. Mandatory testing, one time, will be able to tell us if someone is positive and yet symptom-free. That is good to learn, be it for the residents or the staff. It is not, however, conclusive in any way of what the situation will be in a week or in the weeks to follow. In reality, if we had started with testing two months ago and developed a plan for retesting as needed, many nursing homes might have been in a different situation.

In the upcoming days we will develop a plan for completion of the testing for residents and staff in long term care. We will work with other facilities and our national organization to determine what, if any, is the testing to follow. We are sending a communication to the families/POAs for every resident and residents in Martin Health Center assuring them that we have access to supplies for testing and that we will be developing a specific process for acquisition over the upcoming days.

I have also sent a communication to Senator Bill Brady respectfully requesting that the restrictions on long term care and Assisted Living be modified to allow visits between a resident and a loved one out of doors, and socially distanced with each wearing masks. A staff member would be required to be present to ensure the social distancing. In my email I indicated that the chance of virus transmission in this situation is minimal, but the impact on a resident’s well-being would be huge. Isolation is difficult for everybody and in many, many cases it is having a negative impact on people’s well-being.

Please know we are advocating on your behalf and are here to protect in every way we can. Please let us know how we can serve you better.