
COVID-19 UPDATE

TO: WESTMINSTER VILLAGE RESIDENTS AND STAFF
FROM: MATT RIEHLE
DATE: AUGUST 21, 2020

As has been a common theme of Barb's most recent updates, I will start this week off with another nod to testing which continues to be one of our most pressing issues. We continue to slowly receive results from our last round of testing, and they continue to all be negative, which is great. However, we still do not have all of the results and do not anticipate a significant improvement in the upcoming week. That being said, we have not had any new identified cases and thanks to the mindfulness of our residents, families, and friends along with the diligence of staff we are ending the week on a positive note.

As you may have read, there has been emergency approval for a new saliva-based test which is much quicker and more cost effective for COVID testing. Unfortunately, we are awaiting guidance as to availability and if this will be recognized as valid for our testing purposes since it has not yet been proven as fully reliable as the PCR nasal testing. We also have access to the rapid testing devices which are along the lines of the new saliva test and can get us results quickly however they too have the concern that a negative result may not be completely accurate and so the debate continues as to if we can use these as a tool in our COVID response. Additionally, test strips have been difficult to obtain. We have been told by both CMS and IDPH to expect a guidance statement regarding these other options shortly. This may give us some much-needed relief both in the ability to test timely, with quicker results, and the ability to identify potential concerns. We continue to work with both hospital systems in the interim and will be discussing with OSF today options for ongoing testing.

We were pleased to open a limited dining schedule for our Independent Living dining room on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The response was excellent for those that exercised that option while still delivering meals to residents in their rooms for those that are more comfortable with that choice. Please remember if you plan to eat in the dining room do not fill out a menu for delivery on that day. If you had planned to eat in the dining room but for some reason that changes you can call the kitchen to get a meal delivered.

Finally, we have received initial guidance regarding the potential to have some of the restrictions released in the Reopen Long Term Care Illinois plan. We are in the process of reviewing the information and will have a policy in place by the end of next week with some modifications expected by Monday August 31st, which is when these potential changes are allowed to take effect.

As always, wear your mask, wash your hands frequently, and watch your distance. Together, we are making a difference.