



July 2, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

Gratitude

As we approach the July 4th holiday weekend, it is with a tremendous amount of gratitude and appreciation that I share with you that residents have donated over \$160,000 to benefit Duncaster's heroes -- our amazing staff. Funds will be distributed to staff the week of July 6th. The generosity of our residents and their unwavering concern for our staff is another reflection of the special community we have at Duncaster.

Diversity & Inclusion

I am very proud of our community and the conversations we have been having with our staff regarding the systemic racism within our society and the ongoing inequities and disparities that remain so prevalent in our country today. With 75% of our workforce people of color and as a community that values diversity as an important part of the Duncaster mission, I felt the need to reassess our values and our commitment to social justice, respect and basic humanity and to hear from staff. The stories I have heard from staff regarding their own experience with racism and social injustice have been powerful, emotional and moving. We are using these opportunities for conversation to ask ourselves the hard questions: Are we a community that truly values diversity? Are we listening to each other? Do we foster an environment for meaningful conversations and exchange of ideas? What can we do better? My hope is that all employees feel empowered to be proactive, courageous and insist that our community values diversity and invites the inclusion of all persons. Going forward we will use our Duncaster Diversity and Inclusion Council to improve our culture, make Duncaster a better community and a more respectful place to live and work.

Re-opening Plans

Over the past two weeks we have gradually allowed for controlled family visitation and have safely opened certain services on campus. While I am generally pleased with the reports I get on how things are going, I will admit that it is disappointing and disheartening to hear of isolated cases of non-compliance or total disregard for our procedures and recommendations regarding visitation

and recommendations on leaving the campus. Our procedures have been implemented for the simple reason of keeping you and our staff healthy and safe.

On a positive note, starting Monday, July 6th, we will once again be offering in-person fitness classes with John Hoadley and Mary Root. We are starting small and slow to see how it goes and will be following the personal safety protocol guidelines provided by the State. Class size will be limited to 15 participants and residents must register for each class. Masks must be worn to and from the class but do not need to be worn during the class. Seats will be positioned at least six feet apart. You will be required to use hand sanitizer before you enter and as you leave the class. All equipment used will be sanitized between classes. Classes will be held Monday through Thursday. In addition, the fitness classes on Touchtown TV will continue as scheduled so if you can't make a class, you can always tune in. At this time we ask that you register for one class per week so that there is space for all. If you are interested, we can place you on a waiting list for other classes if a particular class does not fill. To register for a class, please call the Fitness Center 50 ext.24 during the staff hours of 8:00am – 4:00pm Monday – Thursday and 8:00am – 12:00pm on Friday and Saturday

Starting on Monday, July 6th, the Library will open for limited hours to residents. Residents can visit the Library on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Only two visitors will be permitted at a time, without exception, so calling ahead (ext.2813) for a time slot is best. The time allowed at the library will be limited to 30 minutes. Residents must wear a mask, use hand sanitizer upon entering and maintain the 6-foot distancing at all times. There will be no newspapers available for now. Returned books will go into a designated bin and Lisa Moss will enter the checkouts into the book. During this time, Lisa will continue to make book deliveries as in the past few months.

Physical Therapy is now open 5 days a week and is seeing one patient at a time with screening and disinfecting protocols in place.

Podiatry services will continue to be provided in the Fitness Center. To make an appointment please call the Main reception desk at ext.0.

Testing

As I have mentioned in previous memos testing of resident and staff will continue to be an important strategy for Duncaster to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. For

the second week in a row we tested all skilled nursing residents in the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and all test results have come back negative. Duncaster continues to be COVID-free. Our attention to proactive infection-control procedures continues to result in positive outcomes. Unfortunately we are faced with the reality that this pandemic is not over and all around the country we are seeing a surge in infection rates and deaths. We are also hearing more officials warning that a second wave could come as soon as later this summer. If so, a return to extended lockdown periods is possible, and would be difficult for all of us. We cannot get complacent.

The following is the next phase of our ongoing testing plans. (Please note that all dates in the future are subject to change as we work with our partners at Hartford HealthCare, Quest Lab and the Department of Public Health.)

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center:

As mandated by the Executive Order from the Governor effective June 24th we began testing all residents on a weekly basis. Staff will be tested weekly beginning on July 9th.

Assisted Living-Memory Care Assisted Living (Dogwood)

As mandated by the Executive Order from the Governor we will begin testing all residents on a weekly basis on July 9th. Weekly testing of Dogwood staff will begin on July 9th.

Independent Living and Social Assisted Living (Talcott Notch/Thistle Way):

Talcott Notch/Thistle Way residents and staff will be tested on July 9th and July 16th. All staff working in the Independent Living will be tested on July 9th and July 16th. Plans for Independent Living resident testing, though not mandated at this time, will be scheduled in mid-July.

For both Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and Assisted Living, the Governor's Executive Order states that we can stop testing once there are no new positive cases among staff and residents for at least 14 days. However, if one resident or staff member tests positive, which is considered an outbreak, weekly testing must resume.

Safety Reminders

With the holiday weekend upon us I find it necessary to remind everyone of the ongoing challenges and uncertainty we face as a community. According to the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the major culprit of getting and/or spreading COVID-19 is close-up, person-to-person interactions for extended periods. Crowded events, poorly ventilated areas and places where people are talking loudly maximize the risk. In general, the more closely you interact with others, the longer the interaction lasts, the greater the number of people involved in the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

While there is no way to ensure zero risk of infection, it is important to understand the potential risks and the prevention measures you should use to continue to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. So, if you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions, practice thorough and frequent hand hygiene, consistently wear face masks when in public and maintain social distancing of at least six feet. And think about:

- *How many people will you interact with?*
 - Interacting with *more people* raises your risk.
 - Being in a group with people who aren't social distancing or wearing cloth face coverings increases your risk.
 - Engaging with new people (e.g., those who don't live with you) also raises your risk.
 - Some people have the virus and don't have any symptoms, and it is not yet known how often people without symptoms can transmit the virus to others.
- *Can you keep 6 feet of space between you and others? Will you be outdoors or indoors?*
 - The *closer* you are to other people who may be infected, the greater your risk of getting sick.
 - Keeping distance from other people is especially important for people who have an increased risk for severe illness.
 - Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces where it might be harder to keep people apart and there's less ventilation.
- *What's the length of time that you will be interacting with people?*
 - Spending *more time* with people who may be infected increases your risk of becoming infected.
 - Spending more time with people increases *their* risk of becoming infected if there is any chance that you may already be infected.

Despite all the uncertainty and concerns about a second wave, I can assure you that Duncaster is prepared, resilient and ready to adapt to quickly changing circumstances.

I hope that you all find a way to enjoy the holiday and celebrate the nation's birthday. Have a Happy July 4th.

Be well. Be safe.