

August 14, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

Testing

I am pleased to report that every employee (Main Building) was tested this week and everyone tested negative for the virus. The next steps in our testing strategy are as follows:

On Monday, August 17th and Tuesday August 18th all employees and residents at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center (Skilled Nursing) will be tested.

On Monday, August 24th all memory care assisted living residents (Dogwood) and all social assisted living residents (Thistle Way/Talcott Notch) will be tested.

Reopening Plans-Update

As we continue discussions for the next phase of the reopening of our community and services, we must be guided by the official state plans, CDC and the Department of Public Health. At this point in time, current measures and precautions within our community remain in place. Keep in mind that reopening is not like turning on a light switch. Think of it as slowly turning up a dimmer switch. The process will take weeks, and months in some areas, as we adjust to a new normal. In all we have reopened shared spaces, halls, fitness, mailroom and the library. It has been wonderful to see everyone being mindful of physical distancing, face masks, group size, and handwashing practices. At this time we encourage independent living residents to:

- Continue to enjoy the beautiful grounds – walk, garden, sit by the pond and enjoy the fresh air and beauty of nature.
- Socialize with others through conversation, happy hours, laughter and catching up. Just limit the group size to no more than 10, wear your masks and practice physical distancing of 6 feet.
- Keep in mind the guidance of public health officials to limit your exposure if you choose to engage in activities opening in the external community, such as golf, tennis, boating, fishing or visiting parks.
- Continue to practice good hand and cough hygiene, and physical distancing of 6 feet. Remember “Further is safer”.
- Wear your mask. Remember “My mask protects you, your mask protects me”. While you might not be showing symptoms, you might still be a carrier of COVID-19.
- Check in on a neighbor you haven’t seen in a while, now is a great time to reconnect.

Mail Room

The Mail Room re-opened for residents to pick up their mail and has proven to be quite a successful event. Having a reason to come to the Commons is in itself a treat! Many residents have ventured out of their apartments to pick up their mail and seem delighted with the opportunity to visit with friends that they have not seen in months. It is very gratifying to note that everyone is following the guidelines by wearing their masks and social distancing. I thank everyone for your cooperation and for adhering to the following safety guidelines:

- Wear your mask... **COVER NOSE AND MOUTH.**
- Limit of **one person at a time** in the mail room.
- Use the Purell dispenser to disinfect your hands as you enter and exit the room.
- Once you have removed your mail from the mailbox leave the room.
- The mail room will be disinfected daily.
- Consider picking up your mail every other day or during off hours to maintain social distancing.

For those who choose to remain in their apartments, mail pick-up and delivery will continue twice weekly on **Tuesday and Thursday** until the end of August. For any questions or concerns please contact Janet Lamenzo at x5115.

Aquatic & Fitness Center

Residents can now use the pools and gym from **8:00am – 12:00pm on Sundays** (the last appointment starts at 11:00am). Please call the Fitness Center at x5024 to make a reservation.

Gallery

The Gallery Committee reconvened and is planning some creative initiatives with our in-house artists. Stay tuned.

Turnover Shop

On Thursday August 20th the Turnover Shop will have a grand reopening sale from 10:00 AM-2:00PM. New limited hours will be posted in the weeks ahead.

Connecticut Travel Advisory Update

The weekly modifications to the travel advisory have been announced and Rhode Island is no longer on the list of states that a visit to would require a quarantine upon return. Additional changes to the list including the addition of Hawaii, Virgin Islands and South Dakota and the removal of Alaska, New Mexico, and Ohio.

The states on the Connecticut travel advisory are:

Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada,

Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the Virgin Islands

This list is updated on a regular basis as the situation develops across the country and can be found at: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Travel-In-or-Out-of-CT>. The FAQs in the advisory answer many of the questions that people have regarding the restrictions.

Final Thoughts

COVID-19's ongoing crises present all of us with infinitely complicated challenges and no easy answers. Tough trade-offs abound, and with them, tough decisions about communicating complex issues to diverse audiences. Everyone has been deeply affected by the pandemic in one way or another as the coronavirus has created great uncertainty, elevated stress and anxiety.

We are doing the best we can under extraordinary circumstances and by and large our efforts to keep the community healthy and safe have been successful. During this unprecedented time our only goal has been to ensure the health and wellbeing of those who live and work at Duncaster. Our decisions are based upon scientific evidence and the need to ensure family engagement and communication, always balancing safety and compassion. We are very cognizant of the fact that the community restrictions we have put in place, including restricting access to a loved one, inherently creates added stress and anxiety. Please remember we are doing this for the very good reason of protecting everyone from the virus.

Duncaster's brave staff have put it all on the line for months, giving their best efforts each and every day to care for residents, comfort families and contain the spread of the virus. And they'll continue those efforts for as long as it takes. In return, I would ask all of you for your continued support and for your patience. Our staff deserves everyone's respect.

Just like most of you, my parents instilled in me and my siblings that the most important thing you can do in this life is to be kind. Never has that been clearer than during the COVID-19 crisis. Kindness often costs very little, yet its value is immense. Being kind is never a bad idea so let's continue to show a sense of togetherness and kindness we can all unite behind.

Be well. Be safe.

P.S. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Keep your distance.