

October 16, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

The news this week continues to raise concerns regarding the resurgence of the COVID-19 in Connecticut. Positivity rates have been increasing with hospitalizations climbing to numbers not seen since June. Health officials and medical experts attribute the recent increase to various factors, including college reopening, K-12 schools reopening, fatigue with social distancing measures, travel, small gatherings and more. Of particular concern to us is the recent outbreaks in area nursing homes and assisted living communities. We will follow these trends carefully as we evaluate and develop procedures and strategies regarding prevention, containment and re-opening of services.

Testing

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center. All staff and residents are currently being tested weekly. Once there is 14-day period of no positives, the health center staff and residents will be tested monthly thereafter. This week's test results are still pending.

Main Building-All Staff and Assisted Living Residents. Currently we are testing all staff and Assisted Living residents. If the results from this week's testing are favorable for all staff and residents, we can go back to monthly testing. If we have a positive, however, we will continue weekly testing until we achieve 14 days of no positive results. This week's test results are still pending.

Independent Living Residents. At this time all Independent Living residents are being tested on a monthly basis. Independent Living were tested on October 13th and will be next tested on December 1st. We have been recently notified by our testing partner, Hartford HealthCare, that insurance companies are now denying payment for asymptomatic testing so we may need to reduce the frequency of testing for Independent Living residents. This week's test results are still pending.

Dining

The Dining Leadership Team held several forums this week with residents to review plans for the possible re-opening of the dining rooms. The forums have been very helpful in addressing residents' concerns and determining the level of interest in communal dining. While everyone anxiously looks forward to returning to the dining rooms we know that this is an important decision and we must mitigate any risks. To that end we will only re-open the dining rooms when we, as a community, feel that we can safely dine. Resident input in this decision is critical and additional forums will be held next week.

Travel Advisory, Self-Quarantine

The state's Travel Advisory directs all travelers to self-quarantine for a 14-day period when entering or returning to Connecticut from one of the identified states. As of October 13, 2020, the following locations meet the criteria and are included in Connecticut's travel advisory. They are:

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

This list will continue to be updated on a weekly basis as the situation develops across the country.

In addition please quarantine for a 14-day period if you have:

1. Been in direct contact with someone who has traveled from one of the above states or outside of the US.
2. You have traveled outside of the US.

Flu Shots

As flu season has approached, Duncaster is taking steps to help keep our staff and residents healthy.

Employees-All Duncaster employees are required to have an annual influenza vaccination or must obtain an approved medical or religious exemption. We are holding flu clinics in October to assist employees with compliance. The vaccination period is October 1st through October 31st for this year.

Residents-All residents are encouraged to get a flu shot. The Hartford HealthCare Geriatric Clinic has been holding Flu Clinics this month and the next scheduled dates are October 20th from 1:00PM-3:30PM and October 22nd from 8:30AM-11:30. Residents should call ext. 5150 to book appointment.

Helpful Tips

Masks should be washed regularly.

- It is important to always [remove masks correctly](#):
 - Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
 - Handle only by the ear loops or ties
 - Fold outside corners together
 - Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing
 - Wash hands immediately after removing, handling or touching a used mask
 - Disposable masks should be thrown away after one use or when visibly soiled

Hand washing Fabric Masks

- Use warm or hot water, some detergent and scrub it for at least 20 to 30 seconds
- Rinse thoroughly and tumble or air dry it
- Be sure to wash your hands after handling your mask every single time

Washing machine

- You can include your mask with your regular laundry
- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the mask

Dryer

- Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry

Air dry

- Lay flat and allow to completely dry
- If possible, place the mask in direct sunlight

In closing, the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases appears to be coming from predominately social spread where people are letting their guard down and feeling relaxed enough to remove masks or sit near one another. While we carefully gather at Duncaster and consider expanding opportunities for more social engagement please wear your mask and practice social distancing. COVID-19 can still spread even among a small group of people and even from people who aren't displaying any symptoms.

Our success in ensuring the overall safety of the community can be largely attributed to your careful adherence to the measures put in place. Thank you your continued and collective diligence to keep everyone at Duncaster healthy. We are all in this together.

Be well. Be Safe.