



November 20, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

With the Thanksgiving holiday approaching in the coming days, I wanted to reach out to all of you to ask for your continued cooperation as we take every necessary precaution we can to protect our residents and our staff from the COVID-19 virus. As noted in the news, we are at a very critical point in this crisis and the next several weeks will be very difficult. At the same time, while families want to gather to celebrate, we must recognize that things are indeed very different this year.

Connecticut is now several weeks into the second wave of COVID-19 with coronavirus cases, hospitalizations and deaths spiking once again. Yesterday, the Governor reported that 145 cities and towns in Connecticut are now in the red zone alert level, the highest of the state's four alert levels. The 14-day positivity rate for Bloomfield is now up to 26.5, increasing from 17.8 last week. Despite restrictions, health officials still are warning of a potential spike in COVID-19 cases following the Thanksgiving holiday.

As cases continue to increase rapidly, the CDC recommends that the safest way to celebrate Thanksgiving is to celebrate at home with the people you live with. Gatherings with family and friends who do not live with you can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. Just because you test negative for COVID-19 in the days prior to your Thanksgiving celebration doesn't mean you are clear of coronavirus infection, experts say. That's why health professionals strongly suggest limiting holiday celebrations to immediate household members only in order to prevent further viral spread. We are strongly urging residents and staff to limit their Thanksgiving celebration to the people in their household or their "bubble." A "bubble" is defined as those who are closest to you and who are limiting their exposure to the outside community. In Connecticut, gatherings have been limited to 10 or fewer people in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus.

We all have an important role to play in keeping Duncaster safe and virus-free. This means every resident, every employee and every family. As a community, we are in this together. While we have done remarkably well over the past nine months, we know that this virus remains particularly insidious and the road ahead will be challenging. We also know that now is not the time to be letting our guard down and we need to continue doing all that we can to minimize the risks and exposure of COVID-19. It about personal responsibility. We must remain

vigilant. We must remain diligent in the proper wearing of masks, use of PPE, handwashing, disinfecting, social distancing, and all of the now-familiar infection control measures that are currently in place. Let's continue to keep Duncaster, our residents and our employees safe from the virus. And remember-your health and the health of your families, friends, neighbors and the employees of Duncaster is literally in each other's hands.

I want you to know that I sincerely appreciate everything that our employees, residents and families have done thus far while continuing to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I truly believe that our efforts are making a difference. The small sacrifices we must make now; such as visitor restrictions, remaining on campus and avoidance of social gatherings, will be key to our community remaining as safe as possible through the duration of this crisis.

In closing, I would be remiss if I didn't share with you that this week we celebrated our Annual Employee Appreciation week. I can't think of another time in our lives when it has been more important to pause and say thank you to all the remarkable employees of Duncaster. This moment in time, this unimaginable reality, has challenged us like no other time in our lives. And despite all the challenges, the sacrifices, the hardships, our employees have continued to do what they do so well-work tirelessly and selflessly to care for people who need us the most right now, keeping our residents and employees healthy and safe.

We know that working in senior living comes with an added responsibility and it takes an amazing gift of compassion and caring to do what we do each and every day. And while these are difficult times and we have a rough road ahead of us, I have asked our employees to remember the impact they are having on the lives of those who have chosen to live at Duncaster. In many ways we have become their families as they cannot easily see family members at this time. And time after time residents tell me how glad they are to be living at Duncaster-what a wonderful tribute to our employees. I remain inspired by their passion knowing that their passion will allow us to accomplish the impossible. I could not be prouder than to be part of this remarkable team.

The dedication of Duncaster's employees was recognized at the 2020 LeadingAge National Conference held virtually this week. Each year LeadingAge bestows the Award of Honor on one member who has provided nationally significant, transformative leadership in aging services and who shows vision, mission, compassion, and courage every day of the year. For 2020, Katie Smith Sloan, President of LeadingAge announced this year's Award of Honor recipient as every member of LeadingAge. Every CNA, housekeeper, service coordinator, dining server, cook, nurse, therapist, dishwasher, social worker, and every administrator, manager, and receptionist. **Everyone.** Katie noted: "Your dedication keeps people

thriving, families together, and communities intact. Thank you for everything you have done, and continue to do, in the face of incredible adversity. You truly deserve this award”.

Be safe, stay home and be well.