



November 6, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

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Connecticut Department of Public Health Issues New Public Health Advisory for All CT Residents Amid Rise in COVID-19 Cases

Governor Ned Lamont announced yesterday during his daily press conference that 68 cities/towns are now under a Red Alert and that the state will be limiting private residential gatherings, both inside and out, to 10 people.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) then issued a statewide public health advisory, stating that in coordination with Governor Ned Lamont's Executive order 9K, effective at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, November 6, 2020, DPH is issuing an advisory for all Connecticut residents to stay home between the hours of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. in order to reduce the risk of further viral transmission. The advisory applies to every Connecticut resident, except 1) those who are essential workers who must leave home in order to go to their jobs; and 2) anyone who must leave their home on an emergency basis to seek medical care or to purchase medical supplies, food or groceries.

Since September 20th, the number of new cases over a 14-day period in Connecticut has increased nearly 3-fold with 6,895 new cases reported during the period of October 18–November 1, 2020 compared to 2,537 cases reported during September 20–October 4, 2020. The average daily case rate for COVID-19 has climbed during the same period from 5.1 per 100,000 population to 14 per 100,000. In addition, at least 70% of Connecticut's population now lives in either a red alert or orange alert community for COVID-19 infection. Hospitalizations for COVID-19 have increased from 68 on September 20th to 329 on October 29th, representing an increase of 483%.

Currently the town of Bloomfield is in the Orange category with a positivity rate of 13.7 for 100,000 population. If the town's positivity rate goes above 14 per 100,000 population, or if we have an outbreak (defined as one positive case in staff or residents), we will halt indoor visitation and reevaluate.

Visitation Guidelines

Without question one of the most difficult decisions for senior living communities during this pandemic has been the implementation of restrictions placed on visitation to mitigate the risk of the virus. Our leadership team perseverates over this issue daily. As noted in a recent New York Times article "the impact of separation from family and friends is among the hardest deprivations of the pandemic". The article further states that communities like ours face "an impossible choice between depriving residents of vital human contact and inviting the virus inside".

Duncaster has been working tirelessly to develop thoughtful and careful guidelines to safely enable friends and family to visit residents in all levels of housing and care during the COVID- 19 pandemic. Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Connecticut DPH the following is an update on our community visitation guidelines for Duncaster residents and their families and friends.

Independent Living Residents

We still strongly discourage residents from inviting visitors into Duncaster in order to minimize the risk associated with COVID-19 exposure. Allowing visitors into our community brings risk, so we must do this with an abundance of caution.

On Thursday, November 4th we initiated limited family and friends' visitation for Independent Living residents in their apartments with the following guidelines:

Making visit appointments:

- We are requiring visitors to have a COVID-19 negative test results within a week of the visit. For testing locations:
 - Contact your doctor for a test
 - Go to www.ct.gov for locations by zip code
 - Community Health Centers offer testing without a doctor's order www.chc1.com
- Residents or visitors must call the Aquatic and Fitness Center Reception at (860) 726-2000 to make a visit appointment.
- Residents or visitors must call at least 24 hours ahead of the visit. Appointments are limited and staggered so as not to have too many visitors in the building at a time. No "drop in" visits will be allowed.
- Visiting hours, as we begin this first phase of indoor visitation, are 12:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. Monday through Friday and 10am-12pm Saturday and Sunday. Days and hours will be extended as we move towards the next phase of visitation.
- Visits are limited to no longer than one hour.
- A maximum of 2 visitors, 14 years and older per visit. No pets.
- Limit to 2 visits a week per resident apartment.
- No staff should be in the apartment at the time of the visit.
- Visitors are not allowed on campus if they answer yes to any of the COVID-19 screening questions or have been in one of the "red states" listed by the State of Connecticut Travel Advisory in the past 14 days <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/travel>

Checking in for visit

- At the time of the visit appointment, visitors must enter through the Aquatic and Fitness Entrance where they will be screened for symptoms, travel history and educated on guidelines for visitation.
- Face masks must be worn the entire visit, including in the resident's apartment.
- Visitors must use hand sanitizer upon arrival.
- After screening, the visitor is to take the most direct route to the apartment and remain there for the entire visit.
- Visitors are allowed in the apartment only and not in any of the common areas.
- Visitors should maintain a social distance of 6 feet apart from others in the halls, elevators and in the apartment.

When leaving

Visitors should stop at or call the Aquatic and Fitness Entrance reception desk at (860) 726-2000 to check out.

At Caleb Hitchcock Health Center (CHHC), we follow this guidance utilizing screening procedures for any type of visitation, practicing hand hygiene, wearing face coverings or masks, maintaining social distancing, wearing appropriate PPE, cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces and areas, create cohorting of COVID-19 positive residents and complying with CMS regulations for staff and resident testing. In addition, following a person-centered approach and adhering to CMS and CDC guidance, CHHC has been providing indoor compassionate care visitation for any resident that has had a significant change in condition or is deemed as being at end of life.

We are continuing with outdoor visitation; however, with the cold weather upon us, plans to initiate indoor visits have been developed. Unfortunately one of our clinical staff members tested positive (considered an outbreak) for COVID-19 and therefore indoor visits at CHHC are on hold for 2 weeks because of the outbreak. Tents will remain for outdoor visits. As soon as CHHC is off the outbreak mode and we have a 14-day period with no positive staff and resident COVID-19 test results we will provide indoor visits.

Assisted Living-Thistle Way/Talcott Notch

We are allowing 30 minute visits in a designated area. Currently the visits are taking place in the Courtyard Corner next door to the Courtyard Cafe. Two adult visitors at a time may visit, but no pets or children under the age of 14 will be allowed. Please remember no food or drinks during the visits and also please refrain from exchanging hugs and kisses. Visitors must first be screened at the Aquatic and Fitness Center for symptoms, travel history and educated on instructions for visitation. Each visitor must attest to having had a negative COVID-19 test within a week of the visit. Visitors will be escorted to the designated area of the visit where they will be discreetly supervised. All visitors must wear a mask, remain 6 feet apart and use hand sanitizer. Please stay within the blue taped markings in the visitation room. Assisted Living visitors are now asked to call the Aquatic and Fitness Center Reception to make visit appointments at least 24 hours ahead. We cannot accommodate “Drop in” visits at this time. Time slots are Monday-Friday 10:30am, 11:30am 1:30pm and 2:30pm. Please call the Assisted Living nurse at (ext. 5152) with any questions. Visitation is subject to change based on the prevalence of cases in the area.

Testing Update

Weekly Staff Testing

In response to the DPH mandate we are now testing all staff weekly until further notice. In addition, we are requiring all essential contractors to be tested on a weekly basis.

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center. We had a staff member that tested positive from the testing that was conducted on October 27th. The staff member is doing well and is on quarantine based on CDC guidance. Contact tracing and case investigation were conducted and it was found that our residents and staff were not at significant risk for exposure. All staff and residents were tested again this week and results are pending. Testing of residents and staff at CHHC will be done weekly as this is considered an “outbreak.”

Assisted Living-Dogwood. All staff were tested this week and results are pending. Residents will be tested next week.

Main Building-All Staff, Independent Living Residents and Assisted Living Residents (Talcott Notch /Thistle Way). All staff were tested this week and results are pending. All Assisted Living Residents will be tested next week. All Independent Living Residents will be tested December 2nd.

Travel Advisory

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. The Advisory changes every week and as the list of “hot locations” continues to expand I thought it would be easier to share with you the locations that are not on the “hot” list as of November 3rd. They are:

Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and USVI.

This list will continue to be updated on a weekly basis as the situation develops across the country. Please remember that the DPH recommends that you should quarantine for a 14-day period if you have been in direct contact with someone who has traveled from one of the above states or outside of the US or if you have traveled outside of the US.

In Closing

As the news and public health data suggests this is a very precarious time. Furthermore, with a surge in the virus and the holidays approaching, we need residents, families and our staff to uphold their responsibility to keep our Duncaster community safe from the COVID-19 virus. A recent quote from the New York Times editorial said it well, “Low risk is not the same as no risk. When it comes to the coronavirus, all risk is shared. The danger is not individual, it’s collective.”

Be safe, be well.