



January 15, 2021

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

It will be an exciting and busy weekend at Duncaster. As I noted in last week's message the Pfizer vaccine will be administered to Duncaster Independent and Assisted Living residents and staff in the Main Building on January 16th from 11 am to 5 pm. CVS pharmacists will be on-site to administer the vaccine to residents and staff who choose to get vaccinated. The second clinic will take place on February 6th and the third clinic will be held on February 27th. The second vaccination clinic for residents and staff at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center will take place on January 17th and the third vaccination clinic will be held on February 7th.

We expect to administer approximately 500 vaccines this weekend to both residents and staff. I am so pleased to report that almost 100% of our residents will be getting the vaccine. The few that will not be getting the vaccine are following their physician's advice. Throughout the pandemic our own distinguished resident, Dr. Larry Rothfield, has provided invaluable information to the management team as we have navigated our way through uncharted waters. As we prepare for the vaccine clinic Dr. Rothfield, Professor Emeritus of Molecular Biology and Biophysics at the UCONN Health Center, noted: "I know that some people are still worried about taking the vaccine. But the data are very clear. This vaccine is remarkably successful in protecting against infection and in protecting against serious life-threatening disease. And it's also clear that significant side-effects are extremely rare. So self-interest alone says that every resident should be vaccinated unless his/her physician advises against it. This will protect the vaccinated individual from this life-threatening disease and will prevent the spread of the disease within the Duncaster community in case an isolated infection does appear in a resident or staff member. If we all pull together we can beat this disease!" Dr. Rothfield further stated "I am, for the first time, very optimistic about the future. If 95-100% of Duncaster residents are vaccinated this will prevent the type of serious outbreak that occurred in December. We can expect this protection to kick in in late February or early March, and perhaps even sooner. And if 85-90% of Bloomfield residents are vaccinated the disease should also be well-contained within the community".

Early in the week the Department of Public Health reported the highest number of COVID related deaths on a single day since May and a widely fluctuating positivity rate over the past several weeks. We continue to be very concerned about a surge from the holiday season and remind everyone to be vigilant. As a result of the January 7th testing we currently have one Independent Living resident (Talcott neighborhood) who is positive. This resident feels fine and is quarantining in their apartment home.

Contact tracing has been conducted and all infection control protocols are being followed. Four residents who reside at our Dogwood Memory Care neighborhood tested positive this week and were transferred to our COVID isolation neighborhood in the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center. Unfortunately one resident passed away this morning. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. A total of six employees and one private duty aide tested positive this week. Five employees and the private duty aide work at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and one employee works part time in the Main Building with no direct resident contact. All employees are either asymptomatic or have mild symptoms at this time and are quarantining at home. Contact tracing has been conducted on anyone who has tested positive and “close contacts” have been notified to quarantine for a fourteen-day period and to monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of illness. All weekly test results for employees who work in the Main Building were negative. Employee testing continues to occur twice a week at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and weekly in the Main Building.

Yesterday Governor Lamont announced that Connecticut’s next phase (1B) of vaccinations has officially expanded to include all residents who are 65 years and older, as well as residents with at least one high-risk health condition. With the expansion, the state has added about 715,000 people to the phase, for a total of more than 1.3 million state residents. The newly expanded phase, which began this week with residents 75 and older eligible now includes:

- All residents aged 65 and older
- Residents aged 16 to 64 who have at least one high-risk co-morbid condition (including cancer and Down syndrome)
- Frontline essential workers (including teachers and grocery store workers)
- Residents of congregate settings (including group homes and prisons)

Because of the size of the phase, the state is rolling out eligibility in waves meaning not everyone in Phase 1B will be vaccinated at once. “This allocation strategy is limited by the number of doses we have available,” said Dr. Deidre Gifford, acting commissioner of public health. “We’re hoping for more vaccine as new vaccines get approved and as the existing manufacturers are able to ramp up production, but we can only give out as many vaccines as we have doses.” Connecticut is doing very well with its vaccine administration program and this new allocation phase is very encouraging news.

Be well and be safe.