

January 22, 2021

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

Last weekend was an exciting and historic one at Duncaster. The Pfizer vaccine was administered to Duncaster Independent and Assisted Living residents and staff in the Main Building on January 16th. In addition the second vaccination clinic for residents and staff at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center was held on January 17th. Over 525 vaccines were safely administered during the organized and well-planned clinics with no adverse reactions reported. To date nearly 95% of our residents and 50% of our employees have now received the vaccine.



As one of the first independent living communities in Connecticut to gain access to this precious life-saving vaccine for residents and staff, Duncaster is eager to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are confident in its safety and efficacy, and look forward to protecting ourselves and each other by getting vaccinated.

As of today we currently have one Independent Living resident (Talcott neighborhood) and two Dogwood Memory Care neighborhood residents who are positive. Unfortunately one resident from Dogwood passed away this week from COVID related complications. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. All Caleb Hitchcock Health Center residents and employees tested negative this week. Two employees in the Main Building, with no direct resident contact, tested positive this week.

A bit of good news regarding testing is that the state has extended their financial commitment to all state-funded COVID testing programs (nursing homes, assisted living facilities, corrections, state employees, and the community testing program which includes first responders and educators) through April 30, 2021. Employee testing continues to occur twice a week at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and weekly in the Main Building.

As we develop plans for a phased reopening of programs and services it is essential that we look to the best available scientific guidance and recommendations from CDC and the Department of Public Health (DPH). We use these data points, plus the data on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community, local hospitalization rates and other factors to determine our safest steps for reopening. While we all want life to get back to normal, we are in the home stretch and it would be devastating if anyone caught COVID-19 between the first dose and the second dose on February 6th. It takes 7-10 days for your first dose of vaccine to reach 50% effectiveness and 7-10 days after your second dose to reach 95% effectiveness. What this means is that there is still the ability to become infected by COVID-19, yet the severity of your illness wouldn't be as bad.

Monday January 25th will put Independent Living and Assisted Living residents (Thistle Way/Talcott Notch) at 8 days post first dose of vaccine. This is the point where we can slowly reemerge into our first phase of reopening with individual and small group activities. This includes community areas or events that one can be socially distant and low risk for spreading or acquiring COVID-19, specifically the mail room, library and the fitness center. The second phase will come in the weeks that follow and will include the hair salon, fitness classes, small gatherings etc. Then 7-10 days after the second dose (and hopes that the CDC and DPH outline their guidelines) we can consider medium size gathering for programs, social gatherings etc.

Today's news offered a glimmer of hope. More than 64,000 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to Connecticut nursing home residents and staff in the last month, and the number of COVID-19 cases in Connecticut nursing homes dropped considerably for the second straight week, continuing a month-long trend that

providers and state officials hope will continue. According to medical experts it's very likely that the vaccine distribution, along with rigorous testing and ongoing infection control, have played a key role in this positive trend. And while there is hope please remember to remain vigilant and continue to utilize proper infection control measures.

Be well and be safe.