

January 29, 2021

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

It was welcome news to read that Connecticut's positivity and hospitalization rates continued a downward trend this week signaling what experts hope is the continuing decline in the prevalence of the virus. The state's seven-day rolling average for positivity was 3.55% the lowest seven-day positivity rate since November 11th. In addition it was reported that COVID-19 cases and deaths in Connecticut nursing homes decreased again this week which may well be an indication that the vaccines are beginning to have an impact on slowing the spread of the virus. While this is hopeful news, experts remind us to remain vigilant, particularly as new strains of the virus have appeared in the state and could impact the efforts to combat COVID-19.

Connecticut is currently in Phase 1B of its statewide vaccination program. So far, more than 299,000 Connecticut residents have received at least one dose of vaccine. More than 64,000 Connecticut residents have had both doses and are fully vaccinated. Connecticut ranks among the top three states in the nation for administering the vaccine to its residents. So far, 35 percent of the state's population over the age of 75 has received the vaccine.

Connecticut is currently receiving roughly 46,000 doses per week from the federal government. The pace of the vaccination program is dictated by supply. Phase 1B includes 1.3 million Connecticut residents, but right now the state is only scheduling appointments for individuals 75 years of age and older. Next priority sub-groups include:

Order of Phase 1b Subgroups	Approx # of residents <i>Current estimates</i>	Estimated Start of Scheduling***
75+	277,000	Currently Scheduling
65-74	353,000	Likely February
16-64 with underlying health conditions	362,000	Likely March
Frontline Essential Workers*	325,000	Likely March
Residents/Staff in Congregate Settings**	50,000	Ongoing via clinics throughout Phase 1b

The best source of information on the status of the COVID Vaccine program, eligibility and vaccine scheduling is the Connecticut Department of Public Health website: <https://ct.gov/covidvaccine>

For family/friends of Connecticut residents 75+ with internet access, information on all appointment scheduling options can be found here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---75-and-older>

Testing

At this time there are no new active cases of COVID-19 in our community! We are still caring for the two Dogwood Memory Care neighborhood residents who tested positive last week in our observation neighborhood. All Caleb Hitchcock Health Center residents and employees tested negative this week. All Dogwood, Thistle Way/Talcott Notch and Independent Living residents receiving Assisted Living services tested negative. All Main Building and Dogwood staff tested negative. Two employees from the Dining department in the Main Building who tested positive last week are quarantining at home. One employee from the clinic tested positive last week and is home quarantining. Appropriate contact tracing and infection protocols were followed. I am pleased to report that all three are doing well.

All Independent Living residents will be tested for COVID 19 on Wednesday, Feb 3rd between the hours of 9 am to noon. We will come to your apartment to conduct the swab. If you are unavailable between these hours, let Janet Lamenzo in Resident Services know. She can be reached at X5115.

Vaccine Clinics

Main Building. The 2nd vaccine clinic for Independent Living residents and staff is scheduled for Saturday, Feb 6th from 11 am to 5 pm. Specific information related to consent forms and time for your vaccine will be forthcoming early next week. The 3rd vaccine clinic for Independent Living residents and staff will take place on February 27th.

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center. The 3rd vaccine clinic for residents and staff will be held on February 7th.

Community Updates

We see great hope and promise in the future, especially with the ability to have vaccination clinics. With that said, we are not out of the woods yet. We must continue to wear a mask, wash our hands, social distance and avoid crowds. Thank you for doing everything you can to protect yourself, your loved ones and the entire Duncaster community. Our first phase of re-opening began this week. We re-opened the community areas or events that one can be socially distant and low risk for spreading or acquiring COVID-19, specifically the mail room, library, woodworking shop, outpatient physical therapy and the fitness center. Management will determine early next week the second phase (14 days past dose #1) which may include the hair salon, fitness classes, small socially distant group activities (card games and classes) small gatherings of less than 10 people etc. Then 14 days after the second dose, and based upon CDC and DPH guidelines, we will consider medium size gathering for programs, committee meetings, social gatherings, dining etc. all with an abundance of caution.

At this time we are still restricting outside visitors from the Main Building including delivery services. If you have a special request please reach out to Resident Services to create a safe plan.

Winter Well-being Tips

Duncaster is committed to helping our residents work through feelings of stress, fear, or loneliness brought on by the pandemic. Everyone feels a bit overwhelmed these days, and that's completely normal. We are taking steps to ensure our residents have the help needed to maintain wellbeing, physically and emotionally, especially during the cold winter months.

Our first line of defense is to minimize the feelings of isolation and nurture positivity by engaging in “reimagined” social, intellectual, and spiritual activities. While following COVID-19 infection control guidelines residents can still find ways to bring the 7 Domains of Wellness (listed below) into your day. This may include an on-line meditation or exercise program, phone or Zoom calls, streaming programs, letter writing or setting personal goals to clean out a closet, rediscover an old hobby or interest or discover a new one.

Some residents may need a bit more help dealing with the unprecedented changes we’re seeing this winter. Whether struggling with fear about the virus, missing family, or just looking for someone who will listen, we are here for you.

- **Nursing.** If you have an immediate emotional need, there’s always a nurse at Duncaster 24/7 at ext. 5152.
- **Buddy System.** Your staff buddy remains available to answer questions and be there for you to help you navigate.
- **Emotional Support and Counseling.** Sara Janowski-Therion, Duncaster’s Social Worker is available for consultation at ext. 5012.
- **Wellness.** If you would like to participate in a *Wellness 360* coaching session with the goal of building a “*my best day*” plan, please reach out to Lucy Eyre, Director of Wellness at ext. 5023.

Here are some steps you can take to stay well this winter:

- **Aim to eat** five portions of fruits and vegetables every day.
- **Stay hydrated** with water and other favorite beverages.
- **Exercise daily** and try to move around or stretch every hour or so.
- **Vitamin D deficiencies** are more common during the winter. Talk with your doctor to see if they recommend adding a vitamin D supplement to your daily routine.
- **Winter gear** is essential, wrap up with gloves, a hat, a scarf and thick socks if you go outdoors. Wear winter boots and/or shoes with non-skid soles. Bring a warm blanket to sit on if you are planning to sit outdoors.

Be well and be safe.

7 Domains of Wellness

Social Wellness is the ability to relate and connect with other people, at home, in our neighborhoods,

Emotional Wellness is our own ability to understand, accept and cope with feelings and challenges.

Spiritual Wellness is our ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives with a set of guiding beliefs.

Environmental Wellness is being aware of nature and our environment for safety, protection and enjoyment of surroundings.

Vocational Wellness refers to our ability to feel fulfilled in activities and jobs that show talents and skills.

Intellectual Wellness encompasses creative and stimulating mental activities that open our minds to new ideas and experiences.

Physical Wellness is about taking proper care of our body so that our body can function properly and optimally.