



March 5, 2021

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

One year ago, everything about daily life as we knew it started to change when COVID-19 arrived in Connecticut. All our normal routines were upended and over the past 12 months, we've faced unexpected and unrelenting challenges. Throughout our country and the world it's been a year marked by tragic loss and economic strain as well as historical scientific achievement including the promise of the vaccine.

It was this time last March that I began communicating with the Duncaster community on a weekly basis about the spread of the COVID-19 virus, something the likes of which we had never seen or dealt with before. Our greatest concern at the time was to ensure that our residents and staff were in a safe and healthy environment. And I wanted to provide you with the most up-to-date information regarding the ever-changing conditions and the important and proactive steps we would be implementing to keep our community safe. How little we knew at the time and we certainly had no playbook to follow.

In a span of weeks, specialized terms such as social distancing, community spread, flattening the curve, contact tracing and personal protective equipment became commonplace. Senior leadership, with input from our Medical Director, began reviewing and revising our pandemic plan based on federal and state health department pandemic influenza plans. We also began to prepare and plan for operations with a reduced workforce, the impact on admissions and discharges at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center, stockpiling items such as soap, tissue, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies and recommended personal protective equipment, such as gloves, masks, etc. A contingency staffing plan was developed that identified the minimum staffing needs and prioritized critical and non-essential services based on residents' health status, functional limitations, disabilities, and essential facility operations. As we learned, prepared and worked, the coronavirus remained ever-present, seemingly inescapable.

Despite the experience described as "building an airplane while flying it" the Duncaster team clearly demonstrated early on that we could manage the impact of this virus and our infection rates through well-informed education, consistent messaging and adherence to proactive infection control measures. And through it all, stories of heartache, heroes and hope emerged. The entire Duncaster community has been truly remarkable in responding to this significant and unprecedented challenge. It has been personally inspiring to see the incredible

commitment by our employees to ensure that Duncaster is always a safe and healthy place to live and work. It is with great pride that I can share with you that Duncaster will continue do the right thing, be leaders in this effort, and always proactive in keeping Duncaster healthy and virus-free.

State COVID-19 Update

Governor Lamont announced on Thursday that in the coming days he plans to revise some requirements that were implemented in Connecticut in the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly when it comes to those relating to capacity levels and travel restrictions. The governor stressed that while some of these restrictions are being eased, **all of the protocols that relate to face coverings, social distancing, and cleaning measures are being maintained**, and people and businesses are urged to continue adhering to those health and safety procedures.

Protocols that will remain in effect until further notice include:

- Face coverings and masks continue to be required
- Bars that only serve beverages continue to remain closed
- 11PM closing time remains in place for events at venues, restaurants, and entertainment
- Indoor theaters continue to have a 50% capacity
- Large event venues (e.g. stadiums) to open in April

The protocols that will be revised in the coming days include:

Beginning Friday, March 19, 2021

- All capacity limits will be eliminated for the following businesses, while face coverings, social distancing, and other cleaning and disinfecting protocols will continue to be required:
 - Restaurants (8-person table capacity and 11PM required closing time for dining rooms continues)
 - Retail
 - Libraries
 - Personal services
 - Indoor recreation (excludes theaters, which will continue to have a 50% capacity)

- Gyms/fitness centers
- Museums, aquariums, and zoos
- Offices
- Houses of worship

- Gathering sizes will be revised to the following amounts:
 - Social and recreational gatherings at private residence -25 indoors/100 outdoors
 - Social and recreational gatherings at commercial venues -100 indoors/200 outdoors
 - All sports will be allowed to practice and compete, and all sports tournaments will be allowed, subject to Department of Public Health guidance
 - **Connecticut's travel advisory will be modified** from a requirement to recommended guidance

Beginning Monday, March 29, 2021

- Capacity limits on early childhood classes will increase from 16 to 20

Beginning Friday, April 2, 2021

- Outdoor amusement parks can open
- Outdoor event venues can increase to a 50% capacity, capped at 10,000 people
- Indoor stadiums can open at 10% capacity
- Summer camps and summer festivals are advised to begin the planning stages to open for the upcoming season

Vaccination Clinic

The third and final clinic at the Main Building was held on February 27th and was very successful. We continue to focus on education and discussions with employees who have chosen not to be vaccinated and are strongly encouraging everyone to do so at vaccination clinics.

We remain cautiously optimistic as we move towards spring. It appears that the COVID-19 vaccines are working and vaccination efforts in Connecticut have been going well. That being said the threat to our community still exists. Regardless of your vaccine status, please continue to wear your mask when you are with people you do not live with.

Testing

We continue with our weekly testing of all staff in both buildings. We have one staff member in the main building who tested positive from this week's testing. This staff member is isolating at home and appropriate contact tracing has been conducted. All other staff and residents in both building are negative and we await Caleb Hitchcock Health Center residents' results.

Monthly Point Prevalence COVID-19 testing for all Independent Living Residents will be on Wednesday, March the 10th, from 9 am to 12:30 pm. As usual, staff will come to your apartment to swab you. If you are not available between the hours of the testing, please let Janet Lamenzo in Resident Services know so that alternate testing arrangements can be made.

We await more information from the Department of Health and CDC about testing people who have had the COVID-19 vaccine. We will always use an abundance of caution for our community and continue to test staff weekly regardless of their vaccine status.

Visitation

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center

We have opened up to indoor visitations at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center and Assisted Living and are following all DPH guidelines for safety.

Independent Living

Based upon current metrics and since nearly 100% of our residents have received the vaccine, we implemented indoor visitation for Independent Living this week while continuing to follow necessary infection control procedures. While we were pleased to begin safe visits from family and friends this week, we are starting slowly balancing optimism and caution. We are grateful for the understanding and support we have heard from residents and their families and appreciate all you are doing to keep Duncaster safe.

Criteria for visiting

- Visitors are only allowed from states not on the Connecticut Travel Ban Advisory List, or if they have quarantined for 14 days upon arriving in

Connecticut. (*While the Governor's advisory has a "testing out" of quarantine option, at this time our approach to maintain an abundance of caution is to quarantine.*)

- All visitors must be over the age of 18 years old. Maximum 2 visitors at a time
- A weekly negative COVID -19 PCR test (within 7 days) is required to visit. A negative PCR test can be used to visit for 7 days from the date of the test (not the date of the result).
- A copy of the negative COVID -19 PCR test result will need to be given to the receptionist at the time of visit or in advance.

We want to share a couple things that we have learned from family members about obtaining a COVID-19 PCR test:

- Call ahead to the testing site you hope to go to, some urgent care centers, rightfully so do not consider getting a COVID-19 test for visitation purposes an "urgent" need.
- The drive through sites such as CVS and Walgreens, are less of the "urgent care" type of testing sites. Call ahead to learn of appointments.
- Community Health Centers offer free testing. Go to www.chc1.com for testing sites across the state and mobile units.

I would like to thank you for all the support and kindness we have received regarding our efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus over the past year. Our efforts to date are truly a reflection of our community-wide prevention efforts. There is no question in my mind that we are stronger together. We still have challenges ahead but the future is looking much more optimistic.

Be well and be safe.