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Providing Specialized Nursing  
& Advanced Pulmonary Care

### **Weekly Family-Guardian Communication**

**...from the Interdisciplinary Care Team – 5/7/2021**

In our effort to maintain open and honest communication, we will continue to provide you with updates about all Respiratory Viral Outbreaks and the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We hope you find this information helpful.

#### **Resident Update**

Our Residents are well in their typical state of health.

#### **Staff Update**

The Staff Member that previously tested positive for COVID-19 returns to work next week and has not had any signs or symptoms of illness.

#### **Resident/Staff COVID-19 Testing**

Following The NJ DOH guidance, Resident outbreak testing continues one time per week due to our positive Staff case. Routine Staff testing is once per week since there is a steady decrease in the rate of the virus in the community. This will continue until further direction from The NJ DOH.

#### **Visitation**

Family-Guardian indoor visitation per NJ DOH Executive Directive 20-025 specific to Pediatric and Residents of Adult Long Term Care Facilities with Developmental Disabilities is delayed. We must be COVID-19 free for 28 days and no longer conducting outbreak testing (details explained in Phased Reopening section). Staffed Outdoor Compassionate Care Visitation for our Families is available for May by appointment only. We notified you last week via mail about the details. Please contact your VPF Social Worker for more information and to schedule an outdoor visit. Video Visitation continues to be available via Skype, Zoom or FaceTime. We encourage you to contact your VPF Social Worker to help arrange this.

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### **Phased Reopening**

The NJ DOH issued Executive Directive No. 20-026 establishing mandatory procedures that Long Term Care facilities must have in place in order to safely reopen to ALL visitors and resume normal operations. This includes Family visitation. The Directive follows mandates from the Center of Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and guidance from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) and the NJ State Reopening Plan. It is based on the following: the rate of community transmission of COVID-19, a Facility's outbreak status and ability to test Staff/Residents, maintain core Infection Prevention and Control Practices, have adequate Staffing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When facilities are COVID-19 free AND no longer outbreak testing, facilities may restore services in phases such as indoor visitation for Resident Family-Guardians. Strict guidelines must be followed in all phases outlined in the Directive to ensure a safe reopening. Since we are conducting Resident outbreak testing and have had a positive Staff case this type of Family-Guardian indoor visitation is delayed until further notice. There are exceptions to indoor visitation defined in this Directive. The following exception, special circumstance indoor visitation is permitted following strict infection control guidelines and is defined as "Compassionate Care Visitation". This type of visitation is available for **ALL** of our Families by appointment on a limited basis. We are sensitive to the extreme duress and stress the separation has caused our Residents, who are children, and to their Families. Please contact your VPF Social Worker for more information about visitation.

Recently, CMS issued guidance documents and The NJ DOH issued an Amendment to this Directive concerning indoor visitation and vaccination. We are in the process of reviewing the information and promise to notify you as soon as we can with an update. We thank you for your support and understanding. We respect and appreciate how difficult this is for our Families.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

We hosted three Vaccine Clinics onsite partnering with Walgreens Pharmacy for our Residents and Staff with great success! We are happy to report that 70% of our Staff are vaccinated and 32 of our Residents are vaccinated out of the 41 eligible to receive the vaccine (Age 17 and older). Although the vaccine is not mandatory to receive it is highly recommended for all individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19 especially those with chronic health issues and all health care workers. The vaccine will continue to be made available to our Staff and Residents. The next onsite clinic will be scheduled in the near future. The vaccine is now available at various sites in the community for all NJ Residents. A NJ State toll free Hotline can be contacted at 855-568-0545 to assist you with general questions about the vaccines, eligibility and location of vaccination sites or you can visit the NJ Hub Website: [covid19.nj.gov](https://www.covid19.nj.gov). We encourage all of our Staff, Residents and Family-Guardians to receive the vaccine. We have enclosed updated information from the NJ DOH about the vaccine you may find useful.

### **Our Commitment**

Resident and Staff wellness and safety is our top priority. Please be reassured we continue to follow all core standards of Infection Prevention and Control measures partnering with the NJ DOH to maintain wellness. Our commitment is verified again during another unannounced visit, an Infection Prevention and Control focused Survey on 11/13 by the NJ DOH. We are happy to report that we are in full compliance with all of the federal and state rules, guidelines and standards of care specific to Infection Prevention and Control.

### **Our Appreciation**

The strength and courage our Family-Guardians continue to demonstrate as we all work through this pandemic is heroic. A heartfelt thank you for your continued patience, support and trust in us. We respect and appreciate our partnership with you.

### **Important Reminder**

We encourage our Family-Guardians to receive a yearly flu vaccine to help keep us all well especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not too late! The State of NJ requires all individuals employed in any NJ Healthcare Facility receive a yearly flu vaccine unless they have a medical exemption from a healthcare provider. All of our eligible Staff and Residents have received the flu vaccine.

Be well.