



November 19, 2021

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

Dear Resident / Representative:

This letter is to provide you with an update on the status of the Veterans Home's efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The safety and wellbeing of all residents is our top priority. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee continues to meet at least weekly to respond to our current situation, review new guidance, and work closely with our health department contacts.

We had 7 new positive staff and 15 positive resident cases this past week. This is a total of eighty residents and ninety-two staff who have tested positive or presumptive positive since testing became readily available. All positive residents remain in the COVID cohort on isolation in the Oak Neighborhood. Next week we will conduct additional resident and staff testing.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and New York State have issued new guidance for visitation in nursing homes. We have been reviewing this and agree with the benefits residents receive from the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they receive through visitation from family and friends. The guidance indicates that continued restrictions on this vital resident right are no longer necessary, but also expects continued adherence to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention to mitigate concerns.

On Monday, visitation restrictions will be lifted, but we will expect everyone to follow these core principles when visiting, especially because Chenango County remains at a high transmission level and there are residents with active COVID cases in the Home:

1. Anyone who has a current positive COVID-19 test, symptoms of COVID-19, or meets the current criteria for quarantine will not be allowed to visit;
2. Everyone must wear a face mask at all times while at the Home (covering mouth and nose);
3. Everyone should follow good hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred);
4. Physical distancing of at least six feet between people, and
5. All visitors are to walk directly to the resident's room or designated visitation area and remain in that location until your departure. Upon departure, please walk directly to the lobby exit.

All residents are currently on transmission-based precautions (TBP) or quarantine but can still receive visitors. Due to this, visitors must follow the signs on the resident room doors, and:

1. Be aware that there exists the potential risk of being exposed to the virus during the visit;
2. The resident should wear a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated), and
3. The Home may require use of other appropriate PPE, if available, for the visit.

Residents may deny or withdraw consent for a visit at any time. As always, please contact your Social Worker if you have any questions or for further assistance.

Best regards,

*Kurt D. Apthorpe*

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