



March 17, 2023

Dear Family Members/Responsible Parties:

I want to provide a brief COVID update for everyone at this time. We have had no new resident cases since the last update, and just one (1) non-direct care staff member who tested positive yesterday, but posed no exposure to residents. That staff member has been removed from work until successful completion of the appropriate quarantine period per CDC & DOH protocol.

The facility remains diligent with performing disinfecting & sanitizing procedures in the resident spaces as a precaution and I encourage all family members to exercise additional caution with visitation. If you feel sick or have any mild symptoms, please stay home for a day or so to recover and don't risk passing the virus to your loved one and potentially other residents & staff. Further, please adhere to the infection prevention & control protocols while you visit—wear your mask properly and at all times, socially distance, and avoid unnecessary contact with others beyond your family member. I encourage those who have not already gotten the bivalent Covid booster for their loved one to strongly consider it, and remember that we can provide either Pfizer or Moderna at the facility on Thursdays during our vaccine clinic.

Beechwood, along with providers across NY State, have been advocating the Governor and the DOH to review the mandatory testing requirements for visitors. I'm pleased to report that updated guidance was issued this morning by the DOH in regards to visitor testing. The new guidance from DOH now aligns with CMS and CDC guidance which specifically states that **nursing homes no longer are required to verify that visitors have a negative COVID-19 test before entry to the facility.** Therefore, effective immediately this will no longer be required for visitation to Beechwood. In addition, the updated guidance speaks to the screening process and we need to obtain some further clarification, but effective immediately visitors will be required to complete the same screening form as staff (which is much easier, less time consuming, and has no testing requirements). We will provide further updates to this process next week once clarifications have been received. Another way to think about the screening form is you are completing that in lieu of signing in the visitor books as was the case prior to the pandemic. Please note: all other current facility visitation guidance remains unchanged and in place at this time. Unfortunately, this includes the face mask mandate since we remain in a community with a high Covid-19 transmission rate as calculated by CMS.

Visitors who have a positive Covid-19 test or symptoms of Covid-19 should not visit per CMS/CDC guidance until they have completed the appropriate isolation (quarantine) period. Visitors who have had a close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection are strongly encouraged to defer visitation until completion of an appropriate isolation period and/or have a negative COVID test taken at home.

This is very encouraging news and allows nursing homes to more align guidance with that which is already in place throughout the rest of our communities. As we receive further updates and clarification, I will further update our facility protocols and inform all of the same. If you have any questions then, please call your social worker, Cathy Davis (RN Director of Nursing), or myself. Thanks again for all that you do to keep our residents safe. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Best wishes,

Rich McCune
Administrator