

December 4, 2020

Dear Family Members,

We would like to share with you the latest information we received from the Department of Health dated November 24<sup>th</sup> and entitled:

**Holiday Guidance for Nursing Homes and Adult Care Facilities**

During the holiday season, Residents and families may want to spend more time together. Facilities must continue to ensure that all visitors adhere to all visitation guidelines and facility policies and strictly adhere to infection prevention and control measures such as social distancing and face covering requirements.

Additionally:

- Facilities are encouraged to find creative and innovative ways to celebrate the holidays without having parties, including staff parties, or social gatherings that could increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Examples may include virtual visitation, virtual parties, seasonal music, in-room holiday book and movie options, and festive decorations.

- NYSDOH and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recommend against residents leaving nursing homes for home or family visitation or other social outings during the holiday season. Data has shown that small family gatherings contribute to COVID-19 spread. The CDC and NYSDOH recommend that individuals at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid in-person gatherings with individuals with whom they do not live.

Nursing home and adult care facility staff should educate the families who are contemplating taking a resident out of a facility for the holidays, as well as the residents about the risks of leaving the facility and the alternative virtual communication options available.

If a resident leaves for home or family visitation or for a social outing, the following requirements must be met for the resident's return to the facility for the safety of other residents and staff:

Nursing home and Adult Care Facility staff should remind residents to follow all recommended infection prevention and control measures outside the facility, including:

- Limiting close contact with others (maintaining physical distancing of six feet or more), avoiding large gatherings and keeping gatherings as small as possible, and use of technology to engage with others remotely
- Wear facemasks or cloth face covering to the extent possible
- Performing frequent hand hygiene
- Avoiding sharing of communal food or drinks

Residents who leave a facility must:

- Quarantine or minimize contact to the extent safely possible prior to their return to the facility.
- Be quarantined on transmission-based precautions upon return to the facility for 14 days.
- **Test negative immediately (within 24 hours) prior to return to the facility.**
- Be tested at least three times during the 14-day quarantine period at the facility, including on the first day (upon return) and the last day that a resident must be quarantined.

Please note that at present Jeanne Jugan Residence would not be able to perform the test required to permit readmittance to the facility.

Since this letter is already very lengthy I just want to add that we can again tell you that everyone has tested negative and there have been no cases of the virus among staff, Sisters and Residents.

We realize that it's very difficult to continue to comply with the demands that keep you from celebrating Christmas with your loved ones, but as you well know this is not over and for the sake of the Residents' safety we must do all we can to protect them.

On a happier note, we have started our annual Christmas decorating and we know that this will cheer up the Residents. You can be sure that our ingenious staff is already working on some creative activities that we will share with you. God bless and have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Sr. Gertrude Mary lsp