



January 12, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Friends,

St. Joseph Rehabilitation and Nursing Center went over 7 months without a case of COVID-19 in the building. This changed 10 days ago when 3 residents were admitted from a hospital unknowingly to us, they were positive for the virus. All pre-admission tests were negative. None showed any signs or symptoms. We had established an isolation unit prior to their admission as a precaution due to the increasing cases of the virus in our community and Boston Hospitals. Although these patients were transferred to this unit immediately, all 3 were discharged from the facility in a matter of days for varying reasons. About a week ago, two residents tested positive and were immediately transferred to the isolation unit. This past Saturday an additional two plus an employee tested positive. So, as of this writing there are 4 residents in isolation and one staff member quarantining at home. None of these cases are displaying any active symptoms of the virus. They are all asymptomatic. The 4 residents will stay for 14 days in isolation after a negative test result. The employee has not been allowed into the facility and will not be for 14 days after she tests negative.

As they are all asymptomatic It is important to note all these cases were identified through an intensive testing effort in the facility. We have performed thousands of tests since last summer on both residents and staff and most recently we are testing everyday. We are in contact with State epidemiologists frequently for guidance and continually observe our staff for adherence to wearing PPE appropriately in accordance with current guidelines by the CDC and Mass. Department of Public Health. We maintain a sufficient supply of PPE which is inventoried every few days. We have no issues with keeping the facility adequately staffed 24/7. The isolation unit is staffed by employees who are solely working on it.

While we are concerned about the re-emergence of COVID-19, we feel we were well prepared for it to happen and can contain it. Our plan, in part, includes the vaccination of residents and staff. We had our first round of vaccinations by CVS on January 4th. They are returning on January 25th for a second round for those already vaccinated. Additionally, anyone who initially declined is invited and urged to get their first vaccination on the 25th. Furthermore, CVS has tentatively scheduled a final visit on February 15th for a second vaccination from the January 25th. No initial vaccinations will be offered on February 15th. And, we have not heard of any plans from the State, CDC or CVS concerning when the vaccine will be available to us again.

Our website is updated regularly with COVID-19 information which includes the number of cases in the facility. You are encouraged to view it regularly and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jeff Diminico
Administrator