



Ascension Living

July 15, 2020

Dear Ascension Living Residents and Family Members,

I hope you're enjoying the summer as best as possible during these challenging times. We've all had to modify our lifestyles and make sacrifices to stay safe and minimize exposure to COVID-19. Keeping our residents and associates safe and healthy – and keeping everyone informed – continue to be our top priorities as we rely on state and federal health experts for guidance.

Thank you for trusting us with your health and happiness, or your loved ones. Your kind words, understanding and unwavering support mean the world to us – especially during some tough days. I've said it before and will say it again: We are blessed to have outstanding associates working around the clock to provide compassionate, excellent care and service to residents and participants. It's a team effort and you are at the center.

I have some good news to share with you. We are celebrating the recovery of over 260 residents at our more than 50 communities across the United States. Since the middle of June, we are seeing a downward trend in the number of diagnosed cases in our communities. We pray that this trend continues as we adhere to strict safeguards.

In addition, I'm happy to report that regulatory services by state health departments in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have conducted 55 infection prevention surveys with 47 receiving no citations. Those who received minor corrections are reviewing current policy, providing additional education and implementing best practices identified by surveyors who visited communities with perfect surveys.

Here are some updates I want to share with you:

- **Since Mid-May, we have conducted 11,742 proactive tests of residents and staff members** in our skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities across the U.S. As of today, across our company, only 5.4% of our residents and 4.6% of associates have received positive results. We continue to conduct COVID-19 tests on associates and residents when necessary, based on original test results and on federal and state guidelines. We analyze test results and work with state and federal health boards to determine the best testing procedure for our residents.

- **Reopening plans are customized by each community** based on guidelines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CMS, and state and local health departments. Some facets include:
 - Communications about what is allowed in each phase, in each community will be shared with you by the community Executive Director.
 - A community may need to revert to precautions of Phase 1 (Red – very high risk) based on possible resurgence of infections within the surrounding region, the community itself, continued access to adequate staffing and personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as local hospital capacity.
 - We will continue to rely on experts for guidance on the most effective measures to help keep our residents and associates safe, healthy and connected during this historic time. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation in protecting our beloved residents. As always, we will keep you abreast of any changes.
- **We have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and COVID-19 testing kits**, as needed.
- **Safe, limited outdoor visitation is now allowed** at select communities per state and CDC guidelines. As communities are ready, we are scheduling 20-minute outdoor visits (limited to two visitors per resident) that will promote a safe environment for residents, visitors and staff. Visitors and residents will be required to wear face coverings and use good hand hygiene. Areas will be thoroughly disinfected between visits and staff members will be readily available to ensure that it is a safe and welcoming experience for everyone. We know you want to see your loved ones and are doing all that we can to open visitation that complies with guidelines. We have sent information to residents and families in those communities that now have outdoor visitation.
- **COVID-19 survey results are in.** We had 980 respondents to our recent survey. Thanks for your insights. We learned that 88 percent said we are effectively providing you ways to stay in touch with family members during the pandemic. You said phone calls and virtual visits are the best modes of communications. We will continue to provide COVID-19-related updates using these methods.
- **If you need medical care, but can't get in for an in-person doctor visit**, you and your family can access Ascension Online Care (ascension.org/onlinecare) around the clock. Doctors can treat colds/flu, eye infections, sinus or respiratory infections, seasonal allergies and more. Video chat with a doctor using your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Please don't put off emergency care for signs of a heart attack or stroke, COVID-19 symptoms or other life-threatening conditions. Hospitals are safe places to receive care

from trained healthcare professionals. Visit ascension.org or amitahealth.org, our Illinois hospital partner, to find the nearest ER or dial 911.

- **We are accepting new independent living residents** as long as they self-isolate for 14 days. We also have processes in place to ensure safe admission to designated admission units in our skilled nursing facilities.

Ascension Living will not stop working to keep our communities healthy during this time and prevent the spread of infection while continuing to care for those who need us most. We know this has been a difficult time for you and your family. Now and always, Ascension Living is here for you and your family. We will keep you informed of any new developments in your community.

Please take a few minutes to review Ascension Living's updated COVID-19 FAQs at <https://ascensionliving.org/Resources>.

If you have any questions, please email AscensionLiving@ascension.org.

Thank you again for trusting us with your care or a family member. God bless you and have a safe summer.

Regards,



Danny Stricker
President, Ascension Living