



August 10, 2021

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe, but we are again moving closer to another surge in cases of COVID in our greater community. We have received new guidance from Massachusetts' Department of Public Health that we' would like to share with you. Some of the guidance we will implement immediately, while others we need time to develop a plan a put various policies and procedures in place. As always, please reach out to our leadership with any questions – and we will continue to send more updates as often as necessary to keep you up to date.

#### **Vaccinations – Residents**

Most importantly – we can't stress enough the importance of getting vaccinated. While a significant majority of our residents are vaccinated, if your loved one is not yet vaccinated, please contact Ally Audette at 508-927-3346 or email at [inc@plymouthrhcc.com](mailto:inc@plymouthrhcc.com) to schedule a vaccination. We are working with our pharmacy provider now to conduct additional in-house clinics in the coming weeks, but not later than September 1.

#### **Vaccinations – Employees**

We will continue to advocate and encourage any staff who have not received their vaccination to do so ASAP. Again, we are working with our pharmacy provider now to conduct additional in-house clinics in the coming weeks as **ALL** employees in Massachusetts nursing homes (**including non-direct care staff**) are required to be vaccinated by October 10<sup>th</sup>. This mandate comes from Governor Baker through an Executive Order. Employees may not otherwise decline the vaccine; only the following exceptions apply:

- Administration is medically contraindicated, which means administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be detrimental to the individual's health or
- The individual objects to vaccination based on a sincerely held religious belief and the individual is able to perform their essential job functions with a reasonable accommodation that is not an undue burden on the nursing home.

All new employees hired by our center must be fully vaccinated or qualify for an exemption from the requirement as described above prior to being hired by October 10.

## Visitation

- Visitors must now **always wear masks during indoor visitation**, regardless of their vaccination status.
- Visitors are still required to complete our COVID-19 screening process, completing our screening questions for COVID-19 and confirm no exposure to others with COVID-19 infection during the prior 14 days prior to a visit.
- Social distancing is still in effect for our visitors – please socially distance from our staff and others not-related to you, especially in common areas and during activities.
- Should a resident or staff member test positive, the unit, floor or care area will suspend visitation on that section until the unit, floor or care area has gone 14 days without a new COVID positive case. This guideline has not changed. Yet another reason for everyone to get vaccinated.
  - Compassionate Care visit will NOT be suspended.

## COVID Testing / Precautions

- All staff, regardless of vaccination status must participate in weekly surveillance testing beginning August 12, 2021
- Staff may be excluded from surveillance testing participation if they are within three months of being recovered from COVID-19
- Newly admitted residents who are not fully vaccinated must quarantine in a private room, or, if not available, in a room with another resident who has recovered within the previous 3 months
- All staff who are not fully vaccinated before they begin to work each shift must receive a rapid COVID test
- Staff must wear eye protection when providing care for residents

While we are very disheartened by the community COVID numbers and this latest guidance, we remain hopeful that our center will continue to be safe place for you and your loved one and that this will be the last we see of COVID.

Again, please do not hesitate to contact our leadership team with any questions on any of the above items or anything else related to the care of your loved one.