

August 26, 2021

To families of the residents of Garvey Manor and Our Lady of the Alleghenies Residence,

The Covid situation is changing rapidly in our area. It was reported last Friday that the Blair County positivity rate jumped radically from 2.9% to 3.7% to **5.8%** in the course of two weeks. **It is expected to go up again at the end of this week.** This important factor tells us that the rise in cases is serious and dangerous for our community at large, and a real threat to our vulnerable residents. WE ASK YOU TO PLEASE let all persons who may be visiting your loved one know that no one should attempt to visit if they have any symptoms that may be Covid (even symptoms of “just” a cold). DO NOT VISIT if a person has been exposed to someone with symptoms or to someone confirmed to have Covid. Please call if you have questions. We do not want to have anyone bring Covid into the building that can result in an exposure and an outbreak. Also, please inform us if you have visited and then find out you have suspicious symptoms or have been exposed to a person with symptoms that may be Covid. We want to be proactive in preventing any possible spread due to an exposure

WE ALSO ASK THAT YOU DO NOT WEAR A CLOTH MASK THAT HAS BEEN WORN OUTSIDE OF GARVEY MANOR/OUR LADY OF THE ALLEGHENIES WHEN YOU COME TO VISIT. Please, put on a clean, disposable 3ply mask, available in the front foyer of Garvey Manor and Our Lady of the Alleghenies when you are visiting. If you want to keep your cloth mask on, you must put a clean mask over the cloth mask. I strongly encourage you, if you are not already vaccinated, to get the vaccine. **An important reminder is that any unvaccinated person who visits a resident MUST REMAIN MASKED during the entire visit and the resident should also be masked.** Masks may not be removed to eat or drink.

All staff and all residents were tested the beginning of the week, with NO positive results. Based on the positivity rate, staff will be tested weekly. As of August 25, 2021, all resident units in both the nursing home and Our Lady of the Alleghenies are considered GREEN ZONES. Quarantines have been lifted. In person visits are permitted and may be scheduled by the usual means. PLEASE remind your other family members that visits must be scheduled. It is a problem when family members come in without an appointment and expect to visit. The person primarily responsible for each resident will be contacted personally if individual residents are on any special precautions relating to visits. Please convey this information to others, if you should receive such a notification. We do not want to or like to have to turn visitors away.

As you probably know, last week the President announced that a mandate is being put into place that all staff in all nursing homes in the country must be vaccinated or the facility will lose funding from Medicare and Medicaid. We are awaiting official information to come from The Center for Medicare and Medicaid, CMS, before we finalize details to put the mandate into place. Currently about 96% of our residents and 70% of our staff and active volunteers are vaccinated. We recognize the importance of vaccinations and have been promoting them for all residents and staff, knowing this is the single best way to universally contain the Covid spread, especially now that the deadly Delta variant is in our area. Unfortunately, the President's mandate does not extend to all health care facilities, such as hospitals, as it should. We hope this will apply universally to all health care entities so that staff that do not want to be vaccinated do not leave long term care and move to the hospitals. We are working diligently to educate our current staff. All newly hired staff must agree to be vaccinated.

We are getting the necessary orders and permissions for residents to get the recommended booster to the vaccine they already received. The booster is intended to increase immunity as an added protection from having a break-through should they have an exposure and get the virus, especially the Delta variant that is more highly contagious than the previous strain. Residents will receive boosters in September, staff in October.

Like so many businesses and health care facilities throughout the country, staffing is the most crucial issue facing us at this time. In our last update, I told you we were hosting a Job Fair. It was moderately successful as we had some credible applicant visit who will soon be employed. Again, I ask if you are looking for a job where you will make a real difference in the lives of the elderly or if you know someone who would be a good fit as part of our ministry, please reach out and call us. Our Human Resources Department would be very interested in talking to you or anyone you refer about the positions we have available at this time.

Thank you, as always for your support and understanding as we continue to do all we can to keep your loved one safe and to provide the most meaningful quality of life that we can.

God bless you.

*Sister Joachim Anne*, Administrator