

November 30, 2021

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

I hope you had a very enjoyable, memorable Thanksgiving this year as families were able to reunite together with much to be thankful for, despite the problems, limitation and distress of the past year. As we now begin the Season of Advent in preparation for Christmas, Hope and Peace of mind and heart are virtues we can appropriately focus on in our personal and spiritual lives.

Covid update:

- During testing for Covid this past week three staff members tested positive. There was no exposure to residents.
- We are less than a week away from the first stage of the federal vaccine mandate. All staff must be vaccinated with at least one dose of a vaccine or have an approved exemption by December 5th or they cannot work. We anticipate we will have some staffing challenges when the deadline goes into effect since we know we will lose some staff who choose not to get vaccinated.
 - While we try to supplement our own staff with staff from nursing agencies, unfortunately, some agency staff are not getting vaccinated. Agencies do not have replacements.
 - Having adequate staff is a concern for us, we are working on contingency plans to assure we have the staff needed to provide care and services our residents require.
 - We continue to advertise, recruit, hire and train new staff. Again, I ask if you know someone who would be a good fit to work for us, we would appreciate referrals for applicants.

Visiting our Residents:

- Visiting for families is more relaxed since scheduling is not required, length of visit is not restricted.
- Visitors/residents are to remain socially distanced (6 ft. apart) during visits.
- Due to the high positivity rate, visitors must mask at all times, even when in the resident's room.
- Visits must be in a designated place – for us that is in the resident's room. Door should be closed.
- Linda Sell has guidance for the number of visitors Our Lady of the Alleghenies residents can have in their rooms. If in question, please contact Linda or Denise Becker.
- Nursing Home residents may only have two visitors at a time due to the size of the rooms. (We asked the Department of Health for clarification of this, but they have not given us any guidance.)
- Visitors may not be in common areas with or without your loved one who is a resident.
- If a family member wishes to be with a resident (Nursing Home) to assist at meal time, prior arrangements must be made with the nurse on the unit at least 4 hours before the meal, so that the resident can be served a tray in his/her room. I am sorry; we are not able to provide guest meals for visitors at this time. A staff member is not able to stay in the room with the resident and visitor(s) during meal time. If a staff member must feed the resident, a visitor cannot be present.

Christmas decoration guidance (based on the Life Safety Code and general safety standards):

- NO live trees or wreaths permitted due to the risk of needles falling off and creating a slip hazard. Also they are a fire hazard if the item dries out.
- NO extension cords permitted in residents' rooms. If decoration is to be lit, cord and plug must reach outlet without creating a hazard. Cords cannot be frayed, split, spliced or in any way compromised.
- NO plug expanders – only two items can be plugged into an outlet. Resident's bed, oxygen concentrator or other medical equipment cannot be unplugged to plug in a decoration.
- Decoration cannot compromise safe passage/circulation around a resident's room or clutter the floor.
- Residents can have live plants, but not if there is a danger that the resident may attempt to eat parts of the plant or the soil. Dead plants/flowers will be removed from rooms and disposed.
- If the resident does not have a personal decoration for the outside of their door, we will provide one.

Gifts or Treats for staff:

- Families often want to provide staff with a holiday treat or token gift during the holidays. We appreciate the gesture to affirm and thank the staff, but, because of infection control measures staff are not permitted to eat in the resident care areas.
- If snack items are provided, they must be individually packaged and items will be taken to the employee break room where they would be available to any staff.
- We would prefer if families wish to express their wishes to staff through treats or gifts that they contribute to a fund that will be used to provide all the staff with a special meal during the Christmas Season. The names of all who contribute to that special treat will be displayed for the staff.
 - If you wish to contribute to a fund for a special treat for the staff, please send it, along with a note as to whom should be recognized as contributing, to my attention here at Garvey Manor.
- All staff appreciate notes of affirmation and thanks, which can be sent and will be posted near the employee break room. There are many persons behind the scene who provide care and services for the residents. While families like to single-out the care person they see most often, others are just as involved in resident care. By providing a common recognition, everyone feels appreciated.

PLEASE SHARE INFORMATION IN THIS LETTER WITH EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS.

Thank you for your attention to this long memo. Our county positivity rate remains excessively high and we are very, very concerned about possible post-Thanksgiving spread of the virus. Please be vigilant and stay well. God bless you.

Sr. Joachim Anne, Administrator.