

January 19, 2022

To families of Residents, and Residents of Garvey Manor & Our Lady of the Alleghenies,

I do not like to start these notes with news that is not good, but we, like the rest of the community at large, continue to struggle with an increase in the number of Covid -19+ cases testing positive.

Since my last update to you on 1/12/22, seven additional staff members tested positive and are off work for the prescribed period of time. Several other staff are off because they have Covid-like symptoms or have had personal exposure and are at risk of developing Covid-19. We also have seven additional residents in the nursing home who tested positive. Most have cold-like symptoms. We now have Covid positive residents on D-1, C-2, D-2, E-2. Due to having multiple cases, the D-2 and E-2 units are designated YELLOW ZONES. We strongly advise that visitors NOT come to these units because of the personal risk to the visitors. We do not have any positive cases among residents of Our Lady of the Alleghenies, and we want to keep it that way! Omicron is the dominant strain now and it is **extremely contagious**.

If you, or any other family members/friends, choose to visit, given the risk that visitors are in bringing the virus in to the resident and the risk for visitors being exposed here, we ask that this guidance be strictly followed:

- ✓ **DO NOT VISIT IF YOU HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS OF A COLD OR ARE NOT FEELING WELL IN ANY WAY. The Flu, as well as Covid, have similar symptoms. We do not want visitors to expose residents to any risk of the Flu or Covid, if it can be avoided !**
- ✓ **Put on a NEW Surgical Mask** immediately upon entering the building and remain masked the entire time in the building, do not remove mask for any reason and avoid touching your mask..
- ✓ **Sanitize hands** immediately upon entering the building and sanitize hands again after touching anything (your face, clothing, items in pockets/purse, elevator button, door knob, railings, etc.).
- ✓ Sanitize hands immediately upon entering resident room, and as you leave the room.
- ✓ **Go directly** from the building entrance to the resident's room. Do not stop to talk to others or go into the sitting room, dining room or spend time talking at the staff Care Base.
- ✓ Visit in the resident's room with the door closed. Remain masked when in the room.
- ✓ **Maintain social distance** from others (residents and staff) while in the building
- ✓ **IF YOU ARE VISITING A UNIT DESIGNATED YELLOW** or entering the room of a resident who is Covid-19 +, you must put on a protective gown before entering and remove before leaving that unit (D-2 and E-2). **PLEASE ASK STAFF TO ASSIST YOU** with the gown. Sanitize hands immediately after removing gown and putting it in the hamper that is provided.

Next week, the Federal Government's Vaccine Mandate goes into full effect with guidance dictating that any staff member that has not been given a medical or religious exemption, or who has not been vaccinated with the one dose vaccine or at least the first of the two dose vaccines cannot work after 1/26/22. We regret that some of our staff choose not to get vaccinated and therefore are deciding to leave their employment with us. We continue to do all we can to recruit, hire and train staff to assure we have proper coverage in all departments. We contract with several nursing agencies to supplement our staff.

Agency staff must also be vaccinated. Unfortunately, most agencies have trouble getting staff who meet the government vaccination requirements.

On a more positive note, on Friday, January 21, Carmelite Sisters and all facilities where we minister (14 locations), will observe the annual **Celebration of the life of our Foundress, Mother Angeline Teresa**, who was born on that date in 1893 and died on the same date in 1984. This observance focuses on the impact Mother Angeline had as a Religious starting our Congregation in 1929, and in developing the standards of care, based on her own love and devotion to the elderly in her ministry, that impact us to this very day. It is her Charism that embodies our Mission and Philosophy. Because of her vision, living example and teaching to the Sisters, we have been the ‘standard bearer’ of services to the elderly, recognized and respected wherever we serve in ministry.

Our CORE VALUES of Respect for the Right to Life at all stages, Compassion, Hospitality and a Shared Commitment of ministry with our staff are the values that direct all we do within all our facilities and gives us our identity. The Carmelite Sisters’ motto “*The Difference is Love*” are not just words to us, but the foundation stone of our Mission. I can honestly say I am very proud to be here where our Values are embraced and promoted in all aspects of service to our residents by all who are in ministry – Sisters, staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, etc.. I believe Mother Angeline Teresa, whose Cause for Canonization is being promoted by the Catholic Church, smiles down upon us at Garvey Manor and the entire scope of our ministry. If you would like to know more about the life of our Mother Angeline Teresa, our Mission and Philosophy or the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm in general, please visit our website www.garveymanor.org or our Congregation’s website www.carmelitesisters.com

“We want our Homes (for the elderly) to be not better, but the best!” Quote Mother Angeline Teresa 9/29/50

“The challenge of providing high quality of care is ours. We are the standard-bearers against those who would exploit the infirmity of old age for their own profit... A lay staff encouraged, trained and inspired by good Carmelite Religious can allow us to go ever forward in meeting the needs of many hundreds of aged people... the lay staff in our homes carry much of the work load and share a good deal of the responsibility. Our role as Religious is to bring Christ to the elderly people by our holiness of life, which will influence the care they receive by our compassion, our concern and our faith, which enables us to see Him (Christ) in each one of them.” Quote Mother Angeline Teresa 9/8/71

Please keep us in your daily prayers that we can get through this present Covid-19 outbreak without any serious illness among our residents and staff. Please continue to be very cautious as you go through daily routines that put you in contact with others, and especially as you come to Garvey Manor or Our Lady of the Alleghenies. God bless you.

Sister Joachim Anne, Administrator