

Family update August 15, 2023

To the Residents and Families of the Residents of Garvey Manor and Our Lady of the Alleghenies,

I have not sent an update letter for several weeks, and it is good that there has not been much to report to you as life here at our facility has returned to some semblance of 'normal'. Just to keep you informed of a few matters as we continue to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere in the home now that the Covid-19 initiatives have been relaxed.

We must still monitor for Covid as it is active in the region. We have had an occasional case among staff members. Even through the current strain does not seem to be too incapacitating to those who get it, the hospital reports that several people have been hospitalized and some individuals become very sick when they contract it. There is a lot of information in the media about the 'Long Covid' effect that some people suffer. There are still a lot that is unknown about this virus. To the best of our ability, we want to protect our residents from exposure. We remain vigilant.

We received notice from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) that, as of August 5, 2023, the Covid-19 vaccine is no longer required for persons who work in long term care facilities. We amended our policy in line with the change in the regulations, and now we do not require the Covid-19 vaccine as a condition of employment. We will continue to educate staff and residents/families, about the benefits of the vaccine and will offer it to staff and residents who wish to receive the now recommended single shot Bivalent vaccine or booster. This will be especially encouraged in the Fall as flu season approaches.

Those who visited recently would have noticed that we changed some of the screening procedures. We no longer are taking temperatures of visitors or staff on a daily basis. We continue to monitor for symptoms, and ask that you be forthcoming if you have any. **PLEASE do not visit if there is a chance you can bring any illness into the facility.** We have also relaxed limits on visitors being able to attend some activities with residents and to co-mingle with other residents and families. Our Activity Department staff have been planning all sorts of events this summer. The residents really appreciate the opportunity to engage with others. We want to keep up this practice, with some reservations for the sake of being cautious. We will not plan any excessively large gatherings and will monitor participation in group events.

Chiller replacement: I reported the circumstance of our need to replace one of our 'chiller' air conditioning units. This project is moving forward. We are so grateful that the rental chiller, supplementing our one remaining chiller, has been able to meet our needs to keep the building comfortable throughout the summer.

Annual survey: From July 31 through August 3, 2023, representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Health were on site to conduct our annual Federal/State licensing survey. While we have not yet received their report of finding, we know that about 12 items were targeted as potential 'deficiencies' or failures to comply with the regulations (in some instances, there were multiple 'deficiencies' attributed to one incident). Once the report is received, we will submit a Plan of Correction to the State Department of Health outlining our plan to bring the practices into compliance. Copies of the report and our plan of correction will be available for review in a binder located in our main lobby. Survey results are also public knowledge on the Federal Government's nursing home website.

We, along with so many other facilities and businesses, continue to experience less than ideal staffing in nursing, housekeeping and dietary. We appreciate the support and understanding of residents and families as we have

modified some schedules. We continue to recruit, but the pool of willing and qualified candidates is very small in our area. We would appreciate any referrals you may be able to send of dedicated and caring persons who might want to join our team! Referrals can be made to our Human Resources Office.

We are also striving to return our census to full capacity both in the Nursing Home and in the Personal Care Residence, Our Lady of the Alleghenies. The effects of Covid, the economy, demographics, staffing and the marketplace all affect our census. Our intent is to bring staff and resident census back up as soon as possible.

I hope you are able to enjoy summer activities with your loved ones. We have been blessed with wonderful weather this year.

Please let us know of any concern you may have, and I will continue to keep you informed periodically, and if there are any major occurrences.

*Sister Joachim Anne*, Administrator