

SUNNYSIDE MANOR

The Area's Premier Family Owned & Operated Senior Living Community

November 18, 2020

Dear Sunnyside Residents, Family Members and Resident Representatives,

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, we'd like to provide clarification based on some questions we've received about Phase 0 restrictions and second, we'd like to share guidance we've received from the New Jersey Department of Health regarding holiday gatherings.

As we've stated in earlier communications, we are currently in Phase 0 of reopening because 2 or more staff members have tested positive for COVID-19. As an update, the staff member that we previously reported as under investigation has been confirmed positive for COVID-19. The New Jersey Department of Health Executive Directive states that when facilities are in Phase 0 "communal dining and all group activities should be limited" and "residents shall stay in their rooms as much as possible". Some have confused this with residents having to quarantine, which is a much stricter standard. A quarantined resident is not permitted outside of their room. Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. Please understand that while we are in Phase 0, we encourage residents to stay in their rooms as much as possible but they are not confined to their rooms. We do not prevent them from coming out of their rooms to enjoy the surroundings and safely interact with their friends.

Earlier this week, we received Holiday Visitation Guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health that strongly recommends against families taking residents out of facilities for holiday celebration events or gatherings. The CDC supports this view in its article "Holiday Celebrations and Small Gatherings" that states people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should not attend in-person holiday gatherings. The obvious concern is that the age of our resident population automatically puts them in a high-risk group. In addition, many have multiple comorbidities such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes and pulmonary conditions that even greatens their risk of succumbing to this virus.

The Department of Health guidance requires that residents who leave their facilities for family celebrations must quarantine upon their return for 14 days. Quarantine requires dedicated staff, use of PPE, and all hazards infection control protocol. This puts a tremendous stress on Sunnyside's residents, staff and resources. While our staffing is adequate to meet the current demands of the pandemic, the additional staffing requirements to quarantine residents that have chosen to leave Sunnyside for a family gathering must be taken into consideration as per the April 13, 2020 Emergency Conditional Curtailment of Admission Orders. Currently, we do not have any residents that are being quarantined.

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Additionally, if a resident leaves Sunnyside for a family visit, he or she must have the mental capacity to quarantine alone in their room for 14 days. Lastly, residents under quarantine may not cohort with other residents. If a resident shares a room at Sunnyside, he or she may not return to their shared room but rather must quarantine in a separate observation room. Depending on the circumstances, a resident may potentially be delayed from returning to Sunnyside until an observation room is available.

Limitations on staff resources, PPE supplies and available space to cohort requires that we restrict the number of residents who will be allowed to leave for family gatherings. Prior to taking a resident out of Sunnyside, the family members must contact Sunnyside Administration to determine whether this will be permitted based on factors such as available space (if the resident shares a room), available resources (such as staffing and PPE) and the resident's mental capacity. Any plans for a resident to be taken out of the building for a family visit requires a 36-hour notice.

Finally, in accordance with the Department of Health guidance, the residents and family/friend will be required to sign a certification that:

1. They are aware of the possible dangers of exposure to COVID-19 for both the resident(s) and family/friend;
2. They will follow masking, social distancing and hand hygiene practices pursuant to CDC and DOH directives; and
3. They will notify the facility if anyone present at the holiday gathering tests positive for COVID-19 or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of the resident's visit/stay outside the facility.

Although the restrictions we've outlined in this letter may seem onerous, please know that our strict adherence to the Executive Directive is due to our utmost concern for the safety and well being of our residents. We are thankful to have come this far without any resident cases of COVID-19 while many of our neighboring communities have sadly lost residents and staff members to this disease. Our resident population is the most vulnerable to this virus, and we will never stop doing everything in our power to keep them safe.

As you can tell from this letter, we strongly urge you to allow your loved one to remain at Sunnyside for the Thanksgiving Day holiday. We are working on some fun ideas to make this Thanksgiving special, and we will be sharing our plans for our Thanksgiving celebration in a separate letter. As always, thank you for your ongoing support.

The Keane Family