

To Our Devoted Staff,

Thank you all for everything you have endured over the last few months. We are so proud to say that our building has continued to be COVID-19 FREE from the beginning of the pandemic. We have you to thank for that. We appreciate you wearing your PPE correctly, being safe in your personal lives, and being flexible as the rules for COVID-19 are ever changing.

This past week, CMS, our regulatory agency, sent out new testing requirements for care centers. Long term care facilities MUST test all staff and residents when there is an outbreak, test staff and residents who have symptoms of COVID-19, and **complete routine testing of all staff**. We completed one round of point prevalence testing in June, which we are so grateful for your cooperation with. However, we are now required to test ALL staff routinely depending on the current CMS county positivity rate.

CMS County Positivity Rate <5% = Monthly Staff Testing
5%-10% = Weekly Staff Testing
>10% = Twice Weekly Testing

Renville County's most current rate of 3.7% indicates monthly testing.

BLHCC will begin testing staff in September per CMS requirements. **Our first day of testing is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2020.** More details will be available soon.

ALL STAFF MUST be tested. Refusing to test will result in being excluded from work.

Going forward, the testing frequency will change from week to week. Please be patient with us as we try to navigate through these requirements. We will do our best to make it as easy for you as we can. Samples will be collected by the state testing team or BLHCC nurses. There is no cost to the employee for the testing. We will need your insurance information. If you do receive a bill, please turn it in to Ranell Carlson in the Business Office to receive reimbursement. While you are waiting for the results from your test, you will continue to work. If your test comes back positive for COVID-19, you will be required to quarantine.

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in our local communities. Please continue to be careful and diligent while you are outside of the facility. Although everyone has done their best to keep COVID-19 out of our building, the reality is, BLHCC will eventually experience COVID-19 in some manner. We will continue to support our staff, residents and families. Keep in mind, when an outbreak occurs, no one is at fault. We are experiencing a global pandemic.

Reminders: Continue to practice hand hygiene and wear your PPE. Masks must be above your nose and eye protection must be worn at all times over eyes and eyeglasses. **DO NOT** twist the ear loops on your masks as it allows air to flow out of the sides which defeats the purpose of the mask. Assist residents in hand hygiene, PPE and social distancing. If you are sick, **stay home**. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, **get tested** at one of the local clinics (clinic information attached). If a resident becomes ill with any COVID-19 symptoms or has a change in base line behavior, alert the charge nurse immediately.

Visitors – MDH has been working on the re-opening of care centers for visitors. They have divided visiting into 2 levels. Our facility is currently operating at a Level 1. This means that we will continue with Essential Caregiver Visits, Compassionate Caregiver Visits, Outdoor Visits and Window Visits. Our doors

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will remain locked for outside visitors and the general community. At any time we receive a positive COVID-19 case, all of these visits will be suspended until further notice. Our facility has decided to remain in Level 1 based on the number of cases in our community and surrounding counties. We are hopeful with the new testing requirements and community compliance with COVID-19 precautions we will eventually be able to transition to Level 2. In the meantime, our goal is to support an Essential Caregiver for each resident and Assisted Living tenant.

We are proud of the work you continue to do every day. It is not easy to work in an environment of ever changing rules and regulations. You make a difference in the lives of our residents with your care, compassion, and dedication. If at any time you are feeling overwhelmed or just need to talk PLEASE reach out to your supervisor, a trusted friend or connect with the FREE COVID-19 Staff Hotline (see attached information).

Mark Rust
Administrator

Kendra Hiles
Director of Nursing