

Date: December 4, 2020  
To: Residents, Families, and Friends  
From: Gustave (Gus) Keach-Longo, President/CEO

RE: **COVID-19 Update**

### **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

At the beginning of this week you may have heard that the CDC is adjusting its guidelines regarding quarantine after a person has had a significant exposure to another person who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The adjustments would reduce the quarantine days from 14 days down to 10 days, or 7 days in some cases. Though I have absolute respect for the outstanding professionals at the CDC, I decided early in the week that The Towers will not be following these adjustments. Though the probability of the virus spreading within The Towers due to this change would be considered low, it would, in fact, increase our risk ever so slightly. Yesterday, the CT Department of Public Health also recommended that CT facilities not follow these adjustments. Our current practice stands and is working.

### **Vaccine for COVID-19**

As I shared earlier this week, preparation for the administration of a vaccine is rapidly underway. The CDC has created recommendations regarding which groups of people should be prioritized for the vaccine. Each state is to develop its own vaccination plan based on those recommendations and is required to submit its plan to the CDC by the end of today. Therefore, plans are changing daily. This is what we know thus far:

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may approve the first vaccine as of December 10<sup>th</sup>, if all goes well. Connecticut is anticipating the delivery of the vaccine (if approved) on or about December 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Based on CDC recommendations (and what I currently know of CT's plan), the first phase includes: healthcare workers (approximately 204,000), long-term care facility residents (approximately 22,000), long-term care facility staff (quantity not published), and medical first responders (approximately 6,000). The Towers meets the definition of "long-term care facility" due to our assisted living program. We may also be prioritized due to the outstanding work of our colleagues in LeadingAge. Due to their advocacy on our behalf, LeadingAge convinced the CDC to include housing communities that are specifically for seniors (i.e. HUD 202s). The Towers is considered a HUD 202. Therefore, we have a very strong chance of being prioritized to receive the vaccine in a number of ways.

- Walgreens is our vaccine partner and we are looking forward to meeting the team member they assign to work with us. Dawn Staton, our Director of Support Services, will coordinate our plan with the Walgreens team member as soon as contact is made.
- My best guess is that we may be able to provide the vaccine in early to mid-January. I will keep you posted regarding our plans as soon as we have them.

### **Our Thoughts and Prayers**

As we feared, this wave of the virus is proving to be just as challenging as the wave we experienced last spring.

Though we have been extremely fortunate at The Towers to have kept the virus at bay and prevented any amount of community spread within our walls, the majority of our colleagues who care for our state's seniors have not been so lucky. As of this week, the positivity rate in our state is the highest ever and that has led to 164 care centers experiencing outbreaks.

My heart is heavy as I learn of the rapidly increasing numbers of CT seniors in care centers passing away from this virus. Each week the number of deaths climbs or doubles, despite the best efforts of our contemporaries. We stand with our friends as they continue to face the unthinkable. May all those souls' memories be for a blessing.

As I think of all those seniors who have passed on, I think of how grateful I am to everyone in our community. We know that the virus is entering The Towers at least 5 times per week right now. We have the test results to prove it. Yet, each time it has entered our doors, it has not taken hold and spread. Folks, I cannot stop the virus from entering our building. I cannot stop it from spreading from person to person once it is here. You, also cannot stop the virus from entering our building. However, WE CAN and WE ARE stopping by working together and by continuing to follow health and safety protocols. Thank you for doing your part to keep COVID-19 at bay.

December, January and February are likely to be our uttermost challenging months. Let's keep working to weather this storm together. I am proud of, and eternally grateful to, each person who consistently wears a mask over their nose, keeps 6 feet apart and keeps hands clean. Keep it up my friends!

**Staying Strong, Staying Safe and Staying Connected! - Gus**

