

Date: January 27, 2021
To: Residents, Families, and Friends
From: Gustave (Gus) Keach-Longo, President/CEO

RE: **COVID-19 Update**

Visitors

We have concluded our Visitor Ban now that we are reasonably past the holiday surge. Visitors are welcome to visit The Towers if they have a negative COVID-19 test administered within the prior 10 days or have completed their COVID-19 vaccination (2 shots). Vaccination card needs to be shown to our Front Desk Officers if the visitor's name is not already on our "Cleared to Enter" list.

New Temperature Taking Kiosk

Monday, February 1st, both entrances will have temperature taking kiosks.

- Move forehead towards top sensor and wait until stick figure turns green; machine will take your temperature
- There is a wrist scanner on the right if you are not tall enough to reach the forehead scanner
- If your temperature is lower than 100.3 the machine will say "safe" and you may enter
- If your temperature is higher than 100.4 the machine will say "abnormal" and an audible alarm will sound.
- In this case:
 - Please remain there until a member of our team can assist you.
 - If you show a high temperature on the second scan, you may have the first signs of an infection and will be asked to leave the campus out of caution. We recommend you contact your physician if your fever persists.

Vaccinations

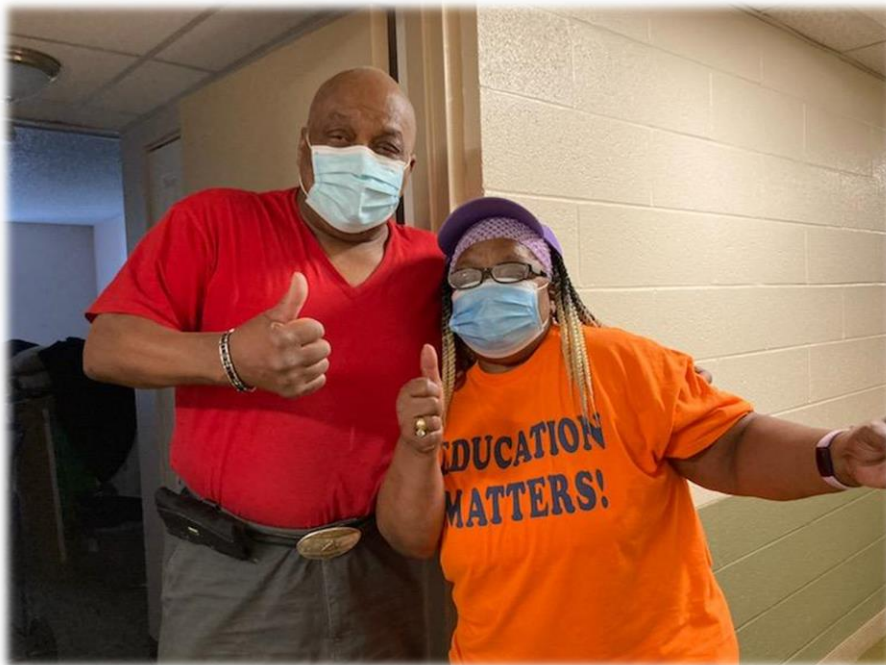
Our first round of vaccinations were a great success. On January, 12th, 13th and 14th Walgreens provided 531 first shots to our residents, caregivers and team members. I couldn't be more proud of our community. This required a lot of planning and flexibility as we figured this out! Bravo Towers Team!! Check out Izzy at 99 years old getting his shot! "Go Izzy!!"



We learned that we can provide the shots needed within 2 days instead of 3, so we are adjusting our schedule for the next vaccine clinics.

Next Vaccine Clinic:

- **Walgreens will offer:**
 - **Second vaccine shots** for individuals who received their first shot on January 12th, 13th or 14th or
 - **First vaccine shots** for individuals who missed receiving their first shot in at The Towers.
- **Residents:** February 2nd 8a.m. to 5p.m.
Walgreens will travel from apartment to apartment just as they did in January.
- **Caregivers and Team Members:** February 3rd 9a.m. to 7p.m. in the Dining Room



Caregivers—Definition

If you are planning to visit The Towers to receive your vaccine, please make sure you meet the “caregiver” definition. We must adhere to our state’s vaccine plan and follow the guidance of the CT Department of Public Health.

You will be asked to sign a statement affirming that you meet the definition before the vaccine is administered.

An individual **CAN** receive the vaccine if:

- actively involved in providing care for residents of The Towers and supporting their activities of daily living on a regular basis.
- individuals who are over 75 years of age and older.

An individual **CANNOT** receive the vaccine if they are:

- An occasional visitor
- A general volunteer
- A Board Member (unless also a caregiver)

Side Effects of the Vaccine

I have had a few people reach out to me after they heard that the side effects experienced after second Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine shot are more noticeable than after receiving the first shot. This is what we know so far:

- **These side effects may be associated with either COVID or the vaccine.**
If associated with the vaccine, they are likely to show up within one day after vaccine is administered, and dissipate within 2 days.
 - Fever, Chills, Headache, Muscle Aches, Joint Pain, Fatigue, Injection Site (pain, swelling, redness), Nausea, Feeling Unwell
- **These symptoms are not likely associated with the vaccine.**
If these symptoms are noticed, they should be treated as though they are associated with COVID-19.
 - Dry Cough, Shortness of Breath, Runny Nose, Sore Throat, Loss of taste/smell

COVID-19 Testing at The Towers

Currently, our plan is focused on achieving a “herd immunity” at The Towers as much as possible by the second week of March (10 days after the second shot of the second round of shots).

We plan to continue our current COVID-19 testing schedule and structure through Murphy Medical Associates through March. Testing may end as of March 31st because at this time every resident, caregiver and team member associated with The Towers will have had 2 chances to become vaccinated. Testing in March (beyond the full vaccinations) will allow us to monitor any potential positive cases throughout the vaccine administration period.

At this time we do not know if we will continue the COVID-19 testing into April. We are conferring with our colleagues and listening to the guidance from our CT Department of Public Health. Information and recommendations are evolving—so it is too early to make this decision. I will let you know once we figure out that part of our plan.

One likely option is that we will reduce testing availability to one or two hours on a set day per week. The primary focus of this testing would be to detect COVID cases for residents who show signs or symptoms of the virus.

COVID-19 Testing is for Residents, Caregivers and Team Members of The Towers

Please remember that testing at The Towers is for residents, caregivers and team members who are already associated with The Towers. At times we have found individuals unassociated with The Towers are coming to us to be tested because our systems are working efficiently. Though we want everyone who needs a test to have a test, our focus remains on our community—and we want to reduce the possibilities of the virus being introduced to the building as much as possible. Out of extra caution, we are requesting that anyone who has had a likely exposure to the virus or who has recently tested positive and is needing a new test, NOT come to The Towers to be tested. This request includes caregivers, team members and especially anyone not connected to The Towers. This just keeps the traffic of potentially contagious individuals out of our building. Residents who have had an exposure continue to remain in their apartments and the test is administered there.

We request that these individuals go to Murphy Medical Associates' other sites:

6 Rock Street
West Haven (next to Jimmie's Restaurant)
Monday to Friday 9a-3p

or 1423 Chapel Street
New Haven
Monday, Thursday, Friday, 10a-3p

Unvaccinated Residents

I'm extremely proud that earlier this month we started the vaccination process for 531 souls within our community. By the end of February, I will personally begin to "exhale" a bit, knowing that each person connected to The Towers will have had two opportunities to become fully vaccinated. This is due to our team's planning and hard work.

However, I am deeply concerned that as of right now, approximately 47 residents either refused the vaccine or were not available when Walgreens offered the vaccine at their apartments. I truly do respect that residents have the right to choose whether or not they will be vaccinated. They can consider their own level of risk related to the vaccine verses contracting the virus. They can decide for themselves.

Throughout all of last year our team put into place several safety measures to protect our residents. At the time, our residents had no "tools" to protect themselves until we provided masks, sanitizer and promoted to stay a "GUS" apart. We ensured that as soon as we were able, we provided every "tool" we could to protect them. Now that we have the vaccine, I chose to mandate the vaccine for all team members associated with The Towers. This is our greatest attempt to protect all of our residents, and each other, from the virus.

As I have shared with some of our team members, I believe that as employees working with a vulnerable population, we can choose where we work. We choose the population of people that brings us the most joy and fulfillment. However, I am well aware that our residents often cannot choose whether or not they receive needed care or even choose from whom the care is given. Therefore, The Towers has done everything possible to help protect our residents, including vaccinating ourselves.



On February 2nd, I hope that those who elected not to take the vaccine will reconsider. I hope that family members spend some time helping their residents consider their options. The Towers is going to carefully move forward and slowly start reopening over the next several months. We must carefully reopen to avoid the long term effects our seniors face in terms of loneliness, isolation and depression. As such, our safety measures will adjust appropriately and life will begin to return back to enjoying our lives with one another again. That will be the time when those who are vaccinated will be reasonably protected. They may still contract the virus, but likely have a milder case. I worry the most about those who decided against taking the vaccine. In the months to come they may be increasingly vulnerable.

Access to The Towers Post Vaccinations

Throughout the month of March, individuals entering The Towers will need to show a negative COVID-19 test administered within the prior 10 days OR a vaccination card documenting the two vaccination dates. We will figure out our protocol for April once we learn more about the recommendations and best practices regarding testing in communities post mass vaccination.

Vaccine Myths and Truths

See attached sheets to responses to common myths. Our local health department asked us to circulate this to our community.

Remember to Stay a “GUS” apart!!

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

Learn the **truth** about the **CO✓ID-19 Vaccine**



MYTH

"I already had COVID-19. I do not need to get vaccinated for COVID-19."

TRUTH

Everyone should get vaccinated. No one is sure if, or how long, someone is protected from COVID-19 after they had the virus.

MYTH

"COVID-19 vaccines will give you the virus."

TRUTH

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently made in the U.S. use the live virus. The goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19.

MYTH

"The flu vaccine protects you against COVID-19."

TRUTH

There is no evidence to support this claim. It's still important to get both vaccines. COVID-19 and the flu are two different diseases.

MYTH

"COVID-19 vaccines have severe side effects."

TRUTH

COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to have mild to moderate side effects. These side effects are common with many vaccinations. These are normal signs that your body is building protection.

For more information: visit covid19.newhavenct.gov



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Learn the **truth** about the COVID-19 Vaccine



MYTH

"COVID-19 vaccines will make you sick."

TRUTH

COVID-19 vaccines will not make you sick. You may have some mild to moderate side effects. These side effects may feel like the flu. They should go away in a few days.

MYTH

"COVID-19 vaccines are not safe because they were made and tested quickly."

TRUTH

Many pharmaceutical companies used lots of resources to make COVID-19 vaccines quickly because of the pandemic. It does not mean that safety rules were not followed or the vaccines were not tested.

MYTH

"You can delay routine vaccinations until the pandemic is over."

TRUTH

Adult vaccines and childhood vaccines are important tools to help keep people healthy. Delaying vaccination can be harmful to your health and the health of your community.

MYTH

"Vaccines can cause autism."

TRUTH

Vaccines do not cause autism. This claim was discredited and the study that linked the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism was withdrawn. Studies across the globe have shown that there is no link.

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Learn the **truth** about the COVID-19 Vaccine



MYTH

"People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 will not benefit from getting vaccinated."

TRUTH

COVID-19 can cause severe health problems and a person can be re-infected. Therefore, even people who have had COVID-19 should get vaccinated.

MYTH

"Getting vaccinated will not stop you from getting sick with COVID-19."

TRUTH

Many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to others.

MYTH

"More people will die from COVID-19 vaccine side effects than from the virus"

TRUTH

This is false based upon the research that has been done to test the vaccine. The COVID-19 virus is 10 times more lethal than the seasonal flu. At least 1-2 in 100 people who are infected with the COVID-19 virus will die.

MYTH

"COVID-19 vaccines have a microchip to track people."

TRUTH

There is no such thing as a vaccine microchip. The vaccine will not track people or gather personal information into a database.

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Learn the **truth** about the **CO✓ID-19 Vaccine**



MYTH

"I will not need to wear a mask after I get vaccinated for COVID-19."

TRUTH

It may take time for everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccination to get one. While the vaccine may stop you from getting sick, it is unknown whether you can still carry and transmit the virus.

MYTH

"If everyone around me is immune, then I don't need to be vaccinated."

TRUTH

Getting vaccinated is like wearing a mask – it isn't just about protecting you, but also your community. The more people who are vaccinated, the fewer chances a disease spreads.

MYTH

"Once you get the COVID-19 vaccine, you are immune for life."

TRUTH

It is unknown how long immunity from a COVID-19 vaccine will last. You may need to get the vaccine more than once, or even yearly, like the flu shot.

MYTH

"You don't need both doses of the two-dose vaccines."

TRUTH

Two doses are needed for the vaccine to be effective and prevent severe cases of the illness. The first shot starts building protection, the second shot boosts that protection.

For more information: visit covid19.newhavenct.gov



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