

Date: April 29, 2021
To: Residents, Families, and Friends
From: Gustave (Gus) Keach-Longo, President/CEO

RE: **COVID-19 Update**

Masks

It's all over the news right now that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), President Biden and Governor Lamont have stated that people can safely stop wearing masks when outdoors as long as they are not in a "crowd." Woo Hoo - this is wonderful news!

Since there is no clear definition of a "crowd," let's agree as a community that masks can be off if we are not within 3 feet of each other. Perhaps we call it a "half-GUS?" (This way you can imagine me laying down chopped in half 😊).

Effective immediately, we are rolling back some of our precautions as follows:

- When you are outside, masks can come off of your beautiful faces! Please do your very best to stay a half "GUS" apart. This way you can enjoy some ice cream outside with your neighbors without the risk of dripping your ice cream on each other!
- No longer need to stay a "GUS" apart. A half "GUS" will do (otherwise known as 3 feet). Therefore, while inside please stay a half "GUS" apart and wear your masks. You do not know who has or hasn't been vaccinated (for whatever reason), so this helps keep everyone safer. To be supportive to our neighbors, please continue to wear masks when in our common spaces.
- No more limitations of 2 people to an elevator. Please do your best to keep a half "GUS" apart as possible in the elevators and be sure to wear your masks in those small spaces at all times.
- We are placing more furniture back into our gathering spaces on the apartment floors. If you restart your card play, pool games or gathering for conversations, please continue to wear your masks for now. I know it is uncomfortable, but I am hoping we can adjust the requirement soon. One careful step at a time folks.



- Only if you are in your own personal space, you are vaccinated and you know that the person(s) you are with have been vaccinated, you could remove your masks and not remain a half “GUS” apart.

Testing

We are **exploring** the idea of changing our testing practices as of May 24th. We have been carefully monitoring our weekly test results for just over two months since our community reached “herd immunity.” Though this is not perfect information, we believe that we have been able to maintain a 93% vaccination rate for our entire community.

We have experienced two “breakthrough” cases over the past few weeks. This means people who have been fully vaccinated but have still contracted the virus. As I have shared, this is expected. Since the Pfizer vaccine (the one we provided at The Towers) is approximately 95% effective, that means that we would expect around 5% of people of those vaccinated to still contract the virus. In our community, that means that approximately 34 people are likely to contract the virus over time. The most important thing to remember is that for people who are fully vaccinated and still contract the virus, they may feel like they have the “flu” for a while. However, they have an extremely slim chance of serious complications or passing away due to the effects of the virus.

Fortunately, we have not experienced a positive case of one of the variants yet. Unfortunately, we had a new positive case of a family member caregiver who had not yet received the vaccine. More worrisome, the resident also chose not to take the vaccine when offered. At this time both are fine and they are in our thoughts.

Subsequently, we are also exploring how to begin scaling down our weekly testing program to be more similar to what other communities are currently practicing. Our protocols have consistently remained much higher than almost all other senior communities. Now is a reasonable time for us to how we can safely adjust given the numbers of vaccinated people. We expect that the Governor’s Executive Order (EO), which expires May 20th, may be extended past that date in a way that will require only certain team members of ours to continue with weekly testing. This would include all employees of The Towers and any organization contracted with The Towers that provides care or support services (e.g. Morrison and Utopia). Therefore, we have been discussing adjusting the testing schedule to once a week for only those individuals covered through the EO or who may show signs or symptoms of the virus. This would mean that we would no longer test our residents unless we have a reason to suspect that the person is showing signs or symptoms of the virus.

We are developing a protocol with Murphy Medical Associates that will address any potential suspicion of new COVID-19 cases. As we reach May 24th, I will share our plan for going forward.

Key Bank

The Key Bank branch at The Towers has been closed due to the pandemic for over a year. Last week representatives of Key Bank contacted me to share that the bank is closing many of its branches, as they found that more people are banking online and with their smartphones. In addition, they informed us there were only 26 residents who used the branch within The Towers and almost all transactions were to withdraw cash for monthly expenses (e.g. laundry cards). Due to these circumstances, Key Bank will not be reopening here at The Towers. Though we would rather them stay with us, their decision seems reasonable. A letter from Key Bank to their customers is due to arrive this week. If you could use some assistance with this change, please reach out to your Resident Services Coordinator who may be able to help you figure out a plan that works for you.

For over a year now, the Finance Department on the Tower One 1st floor has been providing cash to residents who have had the need for cash. We will continue this practice. When we renovate our ground floor (hopefully starting in mid-2022) we will explore including an on-site Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) for our residents' convenience. Until then, please contact our Finance Department if you need help with cash.

Convenience Store (C-Store)

Our Convenience Store (C-Store) is open thanks to a group of wonderful volunteers!! Using the scanning machine was a little scary at first for some residents, but with the assistance of our volunteers almost every person has found it to be easy and convenient. Thank you to our volunteers for all your help making this possible. Please remember, the delivery service we put in place to keep our residents safe in their apartments during the pandemic will end this week. Please stop by the store and see just how easy it is to pick up the items you need. Now it is even easier—because you only need to stay a half “GUS” apart while shopping. 😊

Café Reopening Moves to May 17th

We have decided to delay the opening of our Café just slightly from May 3rd to May 17th. Our team needs more time to set up some of our new systems that will make the Café an even better experience.

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

