

Date: September 7, 2021
To: Residents, Families, and Friends
From: Gustave (Gus) Keach-Longo, President/CEO

RE: **COVID-19 Update**

Entering The Towers

Our protocols for entering The Towers are changing slightly to ensure compliance with some new requirements of the CT Department of Public Health (DPH).

Since May of this year, we have required any non-resident individual wanting to enter our building to show our Front Desk Officers (FDO) a vaccination card and a photo identification (ID) card or a negative COVID test administered within the prior 10 days. We recently adjusted the 10 days to 7 days. We began requiring the photo IDs when we discovered that some individuals were purposely using other persons' vaccination cards to enter our building. In an effort to make things easier for individuals who visited us frequently, we began keeping copies of the vaccination cards and IDs on file so that we had them for their future visits.

Going forward, DPH is requiring that all individuals presenting vaccination cards also attest that their cards are authentic. Given the ease of creating documents like vaccination cards, I assume DPH may have discovered incidents where the cards were not "real." Therefore, in addition to obtaining a copy of the vaccination cards and photo IDs, we **MUST** require a signed statement from each person attesting that his/her card is real. DPH has given us the required form and our FDOs began asking individuals to sign them as of last week.

We are now required to upload the vaccination cards and signed statements into a portal connected to DPH by September 27th. This is to show that The Towers is following the new vaccinate mandate for all "staff" (i.e. anyone performing ongoing services at The Towers). The exceptions for health or religious reasons still apply. Thankfully, we mandated the vaccine earlier this year so we are already in compliance. Now we just need to gather and submit the paperwork. If The Towers is not in full compliance by September 27th we risk a fine of \$20K per day.

The signed statements attesting that the vaccination cards are authentic should be taken seriously. Each vaccination given by a pharmacy has been entered into a data base to track the quantity of vaccinations given and to authorize payment (in our case for Walgreens to be paid). Vaccination cards in the DPH database may someday be cross-referenced with the database used by Walgreens if there is a need to authenticate a vaccination. If there is ever an outbreak at The Towers, G-D forbid, and the contact tracing efforts lead to a person whose vaccination card was falsified, criminal charges

may be filed by the authorities. So, please take this document seriously and help our team meet the requirements by September 27th.

COVID-19 Booster Shots

There has been an unrelenting focus on vaccine booster shots in the media. This has caused several of our residents to become extremely anxious about when they will receive their booster shots—as they fear that they are now at higher risk of contracting the Delta variant. There has also been a strong push from our vaccinated residents to exclude unvaccinated residents from programs and from dining in our Café and Dining Room. I am concerned that we are letting the hype of the media create some fear within our community, so I would like to remind you of a few things:

First, we have been in contact with Walgreens to ensure that we are high on their list of sites that they will visit to administer the boosters. We will remain with the Pfizer shots and are hearing that those COVID boosters should be available around the week of September 20th. As soon as we can schedule our clinic folks, we will let you know the details.

Second, I want to remind everyone that their vaccinations are still working. From everything we have learned over the past several weeks, it is likely that the effectiveness of the vaccines have decreased since February when we had our second doses. However, they are still highly effective.

Third, we have created a fairly robust herd immunity “bubble” here at The Towers. We achieved 93% vaccination rate among all residents, team members and anyone performing regular services at The Towers. That was truly outstanding. I am hearing that other communities never reached this and are just now approaching 80% due to the Governor’s new vaccine mandate. We have done our very best to keep our vaccination rate high by having the protocols at our doors and by assisting new residents to obtain their shots if still needed. Thanks to Stephen Reddiker’s efforts, we hosted a discussion with Dr. Vermund, Chair of Yale’s School of Public Health last week. He answered several questions related to the booster shots as well as addressed concerns about the few unvaccinated residents. He too reiterated that the few unvaccinated residents are not a risk to other residents as they have very low chance of being exposed to the virus since they are in our herd immunity “bubble.”

So, thanks to all of you, The Towers is a safe place for all of us. We reached a high rate of vaccinations early on and we have created some fairly robust methods to keep our protection high. Our protocols are still working. Let’s keep wearing our masks, keep staying a “GUS” apart while indoors and as soon as the booster shots are available, let’s start rolling up our sleeves.

I wish all my friends have a Happy New Year—Shana Tovah. Gus