

Help Keep our Residents Safe from COVID-19

April 20,2020

Dear Residents, Families, Friends:

We want to let you know that everyone here is well in regards to COVID-19. The Buffalo Lake Healthcare Center is committed to keeping our residents safe and we need your help. The virus causing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (*abbreviated COVID-19*) can cause outbreaks in nursing homes. Many of our residents are elderly and may have medical conditions putting them at a very high risk of becoming sick, or even severely ill, with COVID-19. Visitors and healthcare personnel (HCP) are the most likely sources of introduction of the virus that causes COVID-19 into a facility.

To protect our vulnerable residents we want to let you know of the steps we are taking under the direction and guidance of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Center for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health:

1. **We are restricting all visitation.** All visitation is being restricted except for certain compassionate care situations, such as end of life situations. These visitors are first screened for fever and respiratory symptoms. We know that your presence is important for your loved one but, per guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this is a necessary action to protect their health. Visitors who are permitted to enter the building will be required to frequently clean their hands, limit their visit to a designated area within the building, and wear a facemask.
2. **We have introduced alternative methods of visitation**, (such as Skype, Zoom, Video with Facebook Messenger and FaceTime) so that you can continue to communicate with your loved ones.
3. **We are monitoring healthcare personnel and residents for symptoms of respiratory illness.** Non-essential healthcare personnel and volunteers are restricted from entering the facility. Healthcare personnel are actively monitored for fever and symptoms of respiratory infection. Ill healthcare personnel are to stay home. **All healthcare personnel wear facemasks.** As needed, other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as eye protection, gowns, and gloves are worn in order to prevent germs from spreading and help keep residents safe. Healthcare personnel clean their hands frequently.

We assess residents daily for fevers and symptoms of respiratory infection in order to quickly identify ill residents and implement additional infection prevention activities. When ill residents are identified: they are being monitored closely, asked to stay in their rooms, wear a mask if they need to leave their room, and while direct care is provided.

4. **We are limiting activities within the facility.** We have cancelled all group activities within the building and all community outings. We have cancelled all communal dining and are serving all meals in resident rooms. We are helping residents to practice social distancing and to frequently clean their hands. *We are now asking residents wear a cloth facemask when they are out of their room or apartment. Residents may also be asked to wear a mask while direct care is being provided.*

We encourage you to review the CDC website for information about COVID-19, including its symptoms, how it spreads, and actions you can take to protect your health: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Thank you very much for everything you are doing to keep our residents and facility staff safe and healthy. We continue to monitor the situation in our community; we will keep you informed about any new precautions we think are necessary to keep your loved one safe.

Please contact us with additional questions at 320-833-5364

Sincerely,

Mark Rust, Administrator

Kendra Hiles, Director of Nursing

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