

Dear Staff, Residents, Families and Community Members,

This week has been very busy at BLHCC. On August 26, 2020 the Federal Government (CMS) came out with Long term Care (LTC) facility testing requirements for Staff and Residents. Specifically, facilities are required to test residents and staff for COVID-19 based on parameters set forth by the HHS Secretary. At this time our testing is based on the county prevalence rate and we are required to test staff on a **monthly** basis. This rate could change as soon as next week when new data is released. The numbers are required to be checked every other week by the facility and the least amount we will be required to test is monthly. We believe the frequency of staff testing will increase as the numbers have been increasing in our county. At this time we are not required to test residents unless they are showing symptoms, or there is a positive staff case.

We completed our facility monthly testing of staff on Monday 9/21/20. All staff results are in and **all staff are negative for COVID-19**. We feel extremely blessed by this news and very proud of our staff for committing to help our facility remain in compliance with these federal regulations and do their part to protect our residents, each other and their families.

As we move forward into the cooler months we are working on moving our outdoor visits to indoor visits beginning October 6th. We are making plans to utilize our **front door and new community room** for these **scheduled visits**. If you would like to schedule an indoor visit with a resident please see our website at www.blhcc.org and sign up through Sign up Genius, or contact Michelle, Jonna, or Lyn at 320-833-5364 for assistance. Like outdoor visits these visits will be supervised from a distance and you will need to be screened when you arrive for your scheduled visit. You are required to wear a mask for the entire visit and will be required to socially distance. As always outdoor window visits and virtual visits can be arranged at any time.

We continue to expand the essential caregivers (persons such as a family member, outside caregiver, friend, or volunteer who provided regular care and support to the resident prior to the pandemic) that are coming into the facility. These visitors are resident specific and go only to the resident's room. They must be able to follow the core principles of infection control. If you feel you would like to be an essential caregiver and have not been contacted to be this person please reach out to Michelle to set up the training and schedule a time to visit.

Compassionate care Visits are also allowed based on a resident specific situation. Examples of compassionate care situations include, but are not limited to:

- End of life situations
- A resident, who was living with their family before recently being admitted to a nursing home, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support.
- A resident who is grieving after a friend or family member recently passed away.
- A resident who needs cueing and encouragement with eating or drinking, previously provided by family and/or caregiver(s), is experiencing weight loss or dehydration.
- A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress, seldom speaking, or crying more frequently (when the resident had rarely cried in the past).

At this time **all visits to the facility must be scheduled**, you must set these up in advance. We are required to limit the amount of visitors in the building at one time. We will also be required to stop all indoor visits if the COVID-19 status of our residents or staff changes and we have any cases of COVID-19.

We have learned a lot about COVID-19 since the start of this pandemic and we continue to learn every day. Often we joke about who would be the best at COVID-19 Jeopardy and we know that it takes a team to get thought this on a daily basis.

"We are all in this together"

Sincerely,

Kendra Hiles, Director of Nursing- *On behalf of the BLHCC COVID-19 Care Team*

