We’ve made it through another week!

As you are well aware, many states in America are beginning a phased-in economic re-opening, including Arizona. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey announced the beginning stage of Arizona’s re-opening and many restrictions have been lifted, albeit with increased protocols for social distancing and infection control. Gov. Ducey and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have also stated that vulnerable people should continue to shelter in place.

With that guidance and guidance from state and federal authorities, Beatitudes Campus will continue to maintain our external lockdown, which is the best tool we have right now to protect our residents. I can hear your groans with that news, but I want to give you a little bit of hope and light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel good news.

I do sympathize with you about the lockdown restrictions we have made. It’s been hard to be isolated, to change routines, to be stressed and to have the feeling that you have little control over your actions. With that in mind, we have decided to ease some of the restrictions on campus that we had in place. If you choose, we will allow residents to congregate in small groups—no more than six residents together outside and no more than three residents congregating inside—as long as the groups are socially distanced and all people must wear masks. Hopefully, easing this restriction will bring together some very needed engagement with others.

Please understand the above applies to INDEPENDENT LIVING only as the Health Care Center and Plaza View Assisted Living remain on full lockdown per regulations from Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Arizona Department of Health Services.

We still will maintain our restrictions on leaving the campus and on visitation outside of campus. Residents may leave campus for essential visits only (healthcare and banking). If residents leave the campus for a non-essential reason, they will be self-quarantined for 14 days. All other restrictions remain in place, such as food delivery only, essential caregiver visitation only, package delivery only.

I told you last week that we are working on “peeling back the onion,” and we anticipate slowing bringing back services and amenities (housekeeping, fitness center, etc.) on campus in the very near future, but only when we are satisfied that social distancing and infection control can be maintained.

I know we get a lot of questions about these restrictions and why do we have them? The simple answer is safety. Staying at home is the best tool in our COVID-19 toolbox. No one knows enough about the virus – there is no vaccine, no therapeutic cure. The only way to mitigate the spread of the virus is to stay home. COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease and you, our beloved residents, are the most vulnerable to contracting the disease. By staying home, by socially distancing and wearing masks, you are protecting not only yourself, but your friends and staff as well.

I know many of you have questions about testing and when will testing be available for residents and staff. Beatitudes Campus and our state and national professional organization, Arizona LeadingAge and LeadingAge National have tirelessly advocated for more testing across the board for our residents and staff. I was invited to a conversation earlier this week with Sen. Kyrsten Sinema and representatives from her staff and other organizations serving older adults, and the subject of testing was one of the topics of the call. Everyone agrees that testing is essential. One “victory” we had is that, residents and staff in all 147 long-term care facilities in the state will be tested in the next two weeks, and that includes everyone residing and working in the Health Care Center. They are scheduled to be tested in the next two weeks. Testing in this area was mandated by Gov. Doug Ducey, but deployment of that mandate was not as speedy as we hoped. It’s a good start; however, we are still strongly advocating for testing throughout the campus for residents and staff.

On behalf of the administration and staff, I want to thank you for your enduring support during these past nine weeks. The COVID-19 health crisis has changed the way we do business, the way we interact with you and the way that we serve you. We had to create a new model of serving our residents during this pandemic. It’s been fluid and we are learning as we go. But, we couldn’t do it without you and your support. So thank you. You are the foundation of Beatitudes Strong and for that I am so proud.