

December 18, 2020

To Our Residents and Family Members:

Good Morning,

There are many impacts that the holidays can have on COVID-19 in Arizona. COVID-19 is highly contagious, and it is estimated that 75% of the spread is due to asymptomatic individuals. There is an additional risk when gathering with loved ones or close friends. Many people let down their guard when they are with people they trust. However, being in close proximity to someone with COVID-19 and not wearing a mask when with others from outside your household significantly increase your chances of being exposed to COVID-19. Many public health officials have urged people across the United States to keep holiday celebrations smaller and safer this year.

The increased cases, percent positivity and hospitalizations show that COVID-19 is still actively circulating and dangerous. It highlights the need for Arizonans to continue taking important prevention steps they have been following over the past few months: wearing a mask when out in public, staying physically distanced from people who are not in your household, washing your hands frequently, avoiding large gatherings, and staying home when sick.

We have all been closely monitoring the increase in the benchmarks the past few weeks and unfortunately they continue to increase.

Beatitudes Health Care Center has been testing our care staff twice a week for the past three weeks. Last Monday, Monday, we tested 373 staff members with the PCR test and when results were returned, we unfortunately had four campus staff with positive results. These were not employees who work on Sierra Springs or Vermillion Cliffs. Reporting and contact tracing is ongoing.

Yesterday, we rapid tested 120 direct care staff with the BinaxNOW tests provided by the United States Government. Of the results of those tests, I do need to report we one of our CNAs who works on Sierra Springs tested positive for COVID-19. The employee last worked on Sunday, December 13, spent three hours on her shift on December 18 before the individual tested positive. The CNA is asymptomatic and passed screening this morning. Once the positive result was identified, the staff member was immediately sent home to do a 10-to-14-day quarantine following Maricopa County Department of Public Health's most recent guidelines. The employee was in full compliance with PPE precautions.

The Arizona Department of Health Services now considers one (1) positive resident or staff member to be an outbreak. Thus, all visitation has ceased except for compassionate/end of life visits. The employee's test results have been reported to the mandated reporting agencies.

We will be testing all of the residents on Sierra Springs Tuesday, December 22, as a precautionary measure. Due to the previously mentioned 75% asymptomatic spread, we would rather be proactive and test. Our staff will have another PCR test on Monday, December 21.

We have reinforced to staff the importance to continue to follow the proper infection prevention techniques, wear the proper PPE, wear their masks if they are out in public for any reason, and to social distance in all situations. We handed out more of the facemasks that were donated to the campus for the staff to use at home if they are having any family in their homes.

As you all prepare for the upcoming Christmas week know that you are all in our thoughts. Know that we are doing our very best to make your loved ones' holiday as joyful as possible knowing that you will be apart. We hope and pray that this will soon be a distant memory and cannot wait to see the joyous reunions. Until then, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. We are here for you.

Thank you all for supporting and standing by the campus during this most difficult and trying time. We have never been in a situation even similar to this before and we are doing all that we can to protect your loved ones. We are in this together. The safety of our residents and our staff is our number one priority and we could not achieve that without your support and understanding.

Blessings,

Teresa Borton RN Administrator/DON

Matt Brogen RN Nurse Manager

Cheryl Knupp Senior VP of Health Services