

May 13, 2022

Dear Beatitudes Community,

Is the pandemic over? No, it isn't according to the CDC. But so much has changed in the last two years, including the distribution of lifesaving vaccines, more readily available supplies like masks and personal protective equipment, increased testing for the virus and new medications to take if we get COVID. Additionally, there is now clearer federal guidance on testing frequency, isolation protocols, responding to new variants, the use of masks and much more to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

We are so much safer now than we were two years ago. Nationwide, nearly 90% of residents in communities like Beatitudes, and, at the campus nearly 98% of residents and over 90% of staff are vaccinated. This has protected so many of us from getting severely ill and hospitalized or succumbing to the latest omicron surge. And, for all of us who are over 50 years old, now's the time to get a second booster. Beatitudes Campus, in partnership with our pharmacy, Salibus, are holding a booster vaccine clinic next Tuesday, May 17, so if you haven't received your booster, here's your chance.

Although the nation seems to have turned the page on the COVID pandemic, those of us in aging services have not. We are redoubling our advocacy efforts and asking our federal government officials to continue and increase their efforts to help vulnerable seniors and the people who care for them. LeadingAge, our professional organization, has joined the other health care organizations and asking the federal government for targeted financial relief for providers, renewal of a public-private partnership on vaccine and booster shots, and workforce training programs to address staffing shortages.

As a whole, it is estimated that senior living communities have incurred more than \$30 billion in pandemic expenses and losses. The current phase of the COVID Provider Relief Fund will reimburse senior living providers for less than one-fourth of the losses. Other health care providers have received relief that has offset nearly all their losses, but senior living providers have been overlooked, despite six relief packages and more than \$6 trillion in federal spending that was authorized. Just during the first 20 months of the pandemic, the senior living industry lost more than 100,000 workers and more are leaving every day. Ninety-six percent of senior living communities are facing staff shortages just like Beatitudes Campus. We are making recruitment and retention – at all levels of the campus – a top priority so that our services and amenities do not suffer.

At Beatitudes, currently four residents in Independent Living have tested positive for COVID and six staff have tested positive. All appropriate precautions related to quarantining are being followed. COVID-19 metrics in Arizona continue to creep upwards, with the state's latest report showing a higher number of new cases from the first week of May and a greater portion of tests coming back positive for the virus than seen since February, though still far lower than months before that. The vast majority of cases, hospitalizations and deaths are among people not fully vaccinated and boosted.

Thank you for your support and investment in the lives of all seniors, especially those who live at Beatitudes Campus.

My best,



Michelle Just, President and CEO

