



**BETHLEN**

January 11, 2021

Dear Friends and Family of Bethlen Communities:

Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, has seen an increase in the amount of COVID-19 cases this fall. As such, Bethlen Communities would like to provide you with updated information on how COVID-19 has impacted our community and the steps we are utilizing during the pandemic.

### **Our Experience**

We have felt the virus's direct effects here at Bethlen Communities. Our facilities have been undergoing mandated staff testing since the week of October 19th. Bethlen Communities has been administering COVID-19 testing twice a week on staff members. 26 total staff members have tested positive, cumulatively, since October 19th at Bethlen Home. Bethlen Home has also been universally testing all residents weekly. 3 resident positives have resulted this week from testing conducted the week of January 4th, 2021. The healthcare workers that tested positive will remain at home under quarantine. Bethlen Communities continues to follow the "Criteria for Return to Work for Health Care Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19" guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The residents will also be placed in Bethlen Home's Red Zone during the duration of their quarantine.

As per the PA Department of Health, this also means that there cannot be any in-person visitation at the Bethlen Home for the next two weeks. We encourage families to call and schedule a virtual visit or window visit with their loved one.

Ligonier Gardens had one positive staff member with their latest weekly testing for the week of January 4th. As per the PA Department of Health, as result of a staff member positive test result, there cannot be any in-person visitation at Ligonier Gardens for the next week. We encourage families to call and schedule a virtual visit or window visit with their loved one.

While we strive for transparency in everything we do, please know that we are bound by federal guidelines under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA, which protect the privacy of our residents, who may not want their condition known. Our medical director follows all established federal laws in notifying families of any change in the medical condition of their loved ones. Our residents are our first priority.

### **Continued Prevention**

Prior to each shift, staff are required to wash their hands, take their temperature, screen with a pulse oximeter and answer a series of questions to ensure they are not exhibiting any known COVID-19 symptoms. Any employees who develop symptoms during a shift are immediately sent home. At that point, they are directed to quarantine at home. This process is also followed for outside vendors and agency workers.

We also conduct a rigorous sanitation regimen that follows, and in some cases exceeds, all state and federal guidelines. We have increased the daily volume of cleaning done in common, medical and residential areas. All protective and medical equipment are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Although this can be a challenge at times when providing medical care, our facility continues to practice safe distancing guidelines by limiting the number of people in one area and maintaining 6 feet of separation.

We continue to encourage family members to communicate regularly through FaceTime or Skype calls, phone calls, and emails. For more information on scheduling virtual visitation, please contact a member of our activities departments at 724-238-6711 for residents in Bethlen Home, and to schedule in-person visitation at Ligonier Gardens, please call 724-238-3517.

On behalf of the entire Bethlen Communities, we want to thank each of you for your continued patience and prayers. It means a great deal to us.

Sincerely,

Bethlen Communities Administration