



June 26, 2020

Dear Friends and Family of Bethlen Communities:

Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, entered Governor Wolf's "Green Phase" on Friday, June 5th, 2020. As we enter the new phase of the pandemic, Bethlen Communities would like to provide you with updated information on how COVID-19 impacted our community and the steps we utilized during the pandemic.

### **Our Experience**

We have felt the virus's direct effects here at Bethlen Communities. On March 28th, 2020, we received our first positive test result with an employee. Subsequently, five more staff members tested positive for COVID-19 over the course of the next one-and-a-half weeks. On June 10th, 2020, Ligonier Gardens Personal Care Home was mandated to universally test the entire facility, to include all residents and staff. One additional Ligonier Gardens employee received a positive COVID-19; however, this employee is showing no signs or symptoms of the virus. The staff member is now in quarantine at home. Mandated universal testing brings a cumulative total staff positives to seven. Of the seven total staff members that tested positive for COVID-19, five were Ligonier Gardens Personal Care Home employees; one was a Bethlen Transport employee; and one individual was a Home Health employee. We are pleased to announce that six of our staff members have made complete recoveries, including four Ligonier Gardens employees. The fifth Ligonier Gardens employee tested during the mandated period 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).

Our first resident positive case was received on March 28th, 2020. The individual was a resident at Ligonier Gardens Personal Care Home. Over the course of the next two weeks, we had a total of 15 residents test positive for the COVID-19 virus at the Ligonier Gardens Personal Care Home. As previously mentioned, Ligonier Gardens Personal Care Home was mandated to universally test the entire facility. All residents underwent the mandated testing on June 10, 2020. Three additional positive resident tests were received; however, all three residents are showing no signs or symptoms of COVID-19. The cumulative COVID-19 positive test results after mandated Universal Testing at Ligonier Gardens is 18 residents. Twelve of the 18 residents have made full recoveries and are showing no symptoms of COVID-19. When a resident tests positive for COVID-19, we take great care to ensure they're made comfortable in an isolated setting and are under constant supervision. While caring for residents in isolation, staff wear full protective equipment, including medical gowns, gloves, eye protection and masks, and are restricted to working solely in their units.

It is with a heavy heart that Bethlen Communities reports that of the 18 total cases at Ligonier Gardens, we lost six residents to the COVID-19 virus. Our hearts go out to our residents' family members, and with their deaths, we too experienced a very raw and emotional time of grief for the residents we lost. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the family and friends of our six residents lost to COVID-19.

Bethlen Communities is pleased to report that state-mandated Universal Testing was conducted at Bethlen Home from June 16, 2020 through June 20, 2020, and all residents and staff at the skilled nursing facility tested negative for COVID-19.

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, though these visits have been largely curtailed.

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. Doors are shut in common areas to discourage group gatherings.

Bethlen Communities appreciates your understanding as we continue to vigorously enforce the commonwealth's decision to restrict all visits into the facility at this time. This is certainly frustrating when wanting to see loved ones, but we want to do everything in our power to keep our residents healthy. 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 or 724-238-3517 for residents living in Ligonier Gardens.

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