

St. Vincent de Paul Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

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Greetings,

In Phase 1 we have returned to testing employees weekly for COVID surveillance. Our results have returned and everyone tested negative, a blessing for all!!!

We are testing newly admitted residents for COVID. Individuals who had COVID within the last 90 days or those who are two weeks post their finale vaccine and within 90 days of their final vaccine will not require a 14 day quarantine upon admission. In an effort to protect the health and wellbeing of residents and staff, new residents who have not been vaccinated or previously tested positive within the last 90 days will require a 14 day quarantine. The level of transmission is divided into three categories: Minimal, Moderate and Substantial; due to our high rate of infections per 100,000 people we are in the Substantial category for level of transmission. We applaud all residents, staff and community members who have received the COVID vaccine and to reduce the risk of another COVID outbreak all staff and visitors will wear an N95 mask while in the building. We will return to surgical masks when the level of transmission is Minimal. **To help protect our residents and staff we will be rapid testing each person prior to their visit. The tests take fifteen (15) minutes so please arrive at least 15 minutes before start of the visit. While we wait for the results we will ask you to wait in your vehicle and return after 15 minutes.**

“Remarkable” may be the most appropriate way to describe this last week of operating within the allowances of Phase 1. Residents and their visitors are thrilled to see one another in person, residents were excited for the return of activities (particularly Bingo) and residents have enjoyed dining with one another. Jill and Diane have been receiving many calls to schedule visitations and provide answers to the many questions from curious families and friends. The State of NH have been reviewing the difficult balance of maintaining resident and staff safety while authorizing the opportunity to provide desperately needed psychosocial services. DHHS has provided increased allowances during Phase 1 while maintaining some protocols.

- What remains the same? All persons entering the building and all resident must be screened daily. Compassionate Care Visits, indoor and outdoor visitations are permissible, only medically necessary trips are allowed and routine surveillance testing in accordance to CMS guidance.
- What was adjusted? A limited number of non-essential personnel as determined necessary (contractors, podiatrist), elimination of 10-person limit on group activities, allowance of companion animals, visitations shall be monitored but direct supervision is not required and removal of age requirements for visitors.

These allowances are wonderful and maintaining resident and staff safety requires significant caution. At this point companion animals are animals that previously spent a lot of time with a particular resident prior to coming to St. Vincent's. Prior to entering the building pet owners must review the Pet Policy and provide all required information. We request you please contact us for a copy of this policy and to review the guidelines before bringing a pet. Many residents are thrilled to see their younger relatives. There are no longer age requirements for visitation but each person within the building must comply

with mask requirements. If a child is unable or refuses to wear a mask properly they may not participate in the visit.

Thousands of individuals have received the COVID vaccine which is promoting a transition of reopening, this includes compassionate care visits. Resident visitation as identified by CMS is divided into two categories, social visits and compassionate care visits. Social visits are scheduled in advance, held in a designated area which promotes minimal exposure in resident areas and requires disinfection after the visit; compassionate care visits are held on resident units due to the specific purpose of the visit and still requires social distancing. Compassionate care visits are intended for scenarios such as a resident, who was living with their family before recently being admitted to a nursing home, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support. A resident who is grieving after a friend or family member recently passed away or being present as a resident approaches end of life. Compassionate care visits will be scheduled in advance Monday through Friday, prescreen visitors and will be scheduled during normal business hours including weekends; unless for end of life. These visits will be scheduled for up to an hour in length and will be held in a solarium on the floor of the resident you are visiting, unless it is an end of life compassionate care visit. We have closed bathrooms to the public unless it is an emergency, we ask individuals use the restroom before visiting. Each compassionate care visit is unique and requires review to confirm if a compassionate care or social visit is most appropriate per DHHS guidance. Please note, compassionate care visits are not indefinite and may be for single or limited occurrences while in Phases 1-3. **We are open for social visits with multiple times available.**

Reports indicate as a community we have been doing our part to protect one another. Between healthcare workers, first responders, corrections departments and eligible community members well over 1,200 people have received the COVID vaccine in the Berlin/Gorham communities. This weekend extra vaccine clinics are being held by North Country Healthcare across the region administering up to 2,200 doses to 1B individuals with sights on teachers soon. We still have work to do but there is light at the end of the tunnel!

Thank you,

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