



## **Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 and Active Measures at St. Luke Health Services, Bishop's Commons and St. Francis Commons**

***Last Updated – June 9, 2020***

### **What are the various methods being utilized to communicate current updates with residents' families?**

- We are providing updates on our [website](#). At the top of every page you will see a direct link to a page about our active measures in regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage you to check back often as the information will continue to be updated.
- You may also continue to call any of our locations as you would normally. Please refer to the *Contact Us* section on each residence website page for the location or department you wish to connect with.
- We have sent letters via regular mail which has been our main method of communicating important information. However with information changing rapidly, we use our website as the main source of updated information.
- We are continuing our *Family Check-In's* which keeps families who call with questions informed of their loved one's well-being while visitation has been restricted.
- We are using a voice messaging system to communicate important messages with resident family members and staff if there is a need to share information in a rapid manner.

### **Is my loved one safe in their current residence on the St. Luke healthcare campus?**

We are taking every precaution possible to safeguard those entrusted to our care as well as their families and our employees. We have taken specific steps to guard against the spread of COVID-19 in accordance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State and Oswego County Departments of Health. We will continue following their guidance and the direction of our own medical team to protect those in our care to the best of our ability. That is our top priority.

### **Are you accepting new admissions?**

Yes. Please contact our admissions staff at St. Luke, Bishop's Commons or St. Francis Commons if you need assistance or have questions. New admissions complete a health screening prior to entering a residence.

### **Will my loved one still go to their outside medical appointments?**

The medical team has reviewed all outside appointments for our residents. If the appointment is deemed essential, it has not been canceled and the resident will leave our residence with a protective mask. If the appointment was deemed not medically necessary, it has already been canceled and will be rescheduled once the greatest risk in our community has passed.

### **Are you allowing visitors?**

**No.** In accordance with federal and state directives, we are not accepting visitors, except for residents who are actively at end of life - with a prognosis of less than 7 days. Family visitation is limited to no more than two hours and limited to no more than two family members.

### **What does screening involve?**

Before anyone can enter a residence, they complete a health screening. We screen everyone including staff and our health screening consists of a temperature check and attestation of good health. Meaning they are NOT or have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or new or change in cough. Additionally, they are not experiencing two or more of these symptoms: Fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell.

### **What other steps have you taken to protect residents?**

We have done the following:

- Pursuant to an Executive Order that all nursing home and adult care facility personnel in the State undergo diagnostic testing for the COVID-19 virus, staff at St. Luke Health Services, St. Francis Commons and Bishop's Commons began bi-weekly testing of all staff on May 13. This testing continues today.
- We believe that the best way to continue to protect our residents and staff on our healthcare campus during this pandemic is through testing. On Friday, May 22, diagnostic tests were performed for all of our residents at each facility.

- An action team that includes Administration, our Medical Director, nurses and care providers and all other building departments, to monitor the virus's spread and obtain updated guidance from the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Followed infection prevention protocols and best health practices as we do throughout the year. This includes hand washing, wearing gloves and using personal protective equipment as required.
- Ensured we have sufficient supplies to care for anyone were they exposed to or ill from the virus including specialized masks, gowns, gloves, eye shields, and disinfecting solutions.
- Educated staff on how the virus is spread and how to minimize risk.
- Worked with our Environmental Services team to coordinate extensive and frequent cleanings of resident rooms, common areas, and facilities.
- Prohibited visits and restricted access to our buildings and required screening of anyone who enters.

### **How are you addressing each residents' social and emotional needs?**

We continue to provide enrichment programs for our residents but in a different manner that has been our practice. Group activities and performances where members of the outside public are involved, as well as all trips or outings have been canceled until further notice. However, as we do every day, our staff have focused on individual activities that will keep residents engaged and connected – respecting the need for social distancing.

- We are encouraging residents to minimize their activities within a building and ask that they remain in their rooms except for medically necessary purposes. If they leave their room, residents are asked to wear a facemask if able, perform hand hygiene, limit their movement in the facility, and perform social distancing (stay at least 6 feet away from others).
- Innovation and spontaneity have already taken place; we are working together to minimize interruptions in daily routines and habits as best as the circumstances allow.
- With visitation suspended, we have created opportunities for social interaction and engagement. We continue to encourage primary resident family contacts to reach out to us by phone. To help keep in touch with family, we are helping with video-chats using *Skype* or *Face Time*, or simple phone calls.
- Families are also able to schedule “window visits” where we make arrangements to have residents see their family member’s through the safety of a window. Visits should be set up through the Social Work Department.
- We remind everyone that social distancing must be adhered to at all times.

## Can I drop off a package for a resident?

We ask that you limit deliveries to residents as it is possible for the virus to live on surfaces. If a package is deemed absolutely necessary for the resident, it must be dropped off on the tables we have available in the foyer area of each residence.

## What about my loved one's laundry?

Each residence, St. Luke Health Services, Bishop's Commons and St. Francis Commons has the ability to do laundry for all residents.

## Have you had any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on your healthcare campus?

Yes, based on the mandatory bi-weekly diagnostic testing of all staff now underway across our healthcare campus, we have had a total of two staff member at St. Luke Health Services test positive for COVID-19. The first positive test in a staff member was reported on May 11, and a second on May 30. Both staff cannot report back to work until after a 14-day mandatory home quarantine period and a confirmed negative test result.

Based on our resident testing on May 22, one resident at St. Luke Health Services who was asymptomatic tested positive for the virus. No other residents at our three facilities returned a positive test result. The St. Luke resident who tested positive was sent to the hospital for treatment. A subsequent test of this resident was negative. Out an abundance of caution, a limited number of St. Luke residents suspected of having had contact with that individual were placed on appropriate isolation procedures with all necessary protective measures, and we closely monitor the health of each resident for any signs of a respiratory illness. **As of today (6/9), there have been no further confirmed positive tests among staff or residents on our healthcare campus.**

To prepare to provide needed care for residents who are suspected or who have a confirmed case of COVID-19, we have established isolation areas and protocols within each of our facilities. We will cohort and care for any resident with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in these separate areas. Dedicated care teams at each residence will be in place to limit staff interactions with the rest of the facility. Staff continue to use all required precautionary measures and personal protective equipment (PPE) when entering a resident room and throughout our buildings.

We remain in regular contact with the New York State and Oswego County Health Departments, and are following guidelines from the Health Departments and Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC). Following guidelines, we will coordinate all response activities with our local health department.

### **How can I help the staff and facilities?**

As demand for medical supplies increases during the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare providers like St. Luke and affiliates are facing a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, gowns and face shields. We are taking careful inventories, implementing stringent practices to preserve supplies, and soliciting donations from community members and businesses.

Our *St. Luke Family of Caring* has had many businesses and individuals reach out to make donations on behalf of residents and our staff. We thank you and are grateful for your generosity during this difficult time, but our needs increase daily.

We are accepting the following PPE donations:

- Disposable gowns
- N95 respirator face masks
- Disposable face masks
- Face shields
- Coveralls/scrubs

Please ensure all donated items are in their original, unopened packaging.

We are also able to accept homemade cloth masks – and thank the many individuals who have supported us by donating masks over the last few weeks. Detailed instructions for making cloth masks can be found here on our webpage under the [Donate And Help During the COVID-19 Crisis](#) section.

To make arrangements with us to secure your donation, please contact John Wall at 315-342-3166.

**To Make a Monetary Donation** - Our St. Luke John Foster Burden Fund is accepting monetary donations to support our efforts. You can make a [donation online through our secure portal](#).

If you have questions about making gifts during this difficult time, please contact us at [Giving/The John Foster Burden Fund](#)