

April 2, 2020

Dear Staff of Saint Mary's Home of Erie,

We continue to make every effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As you know, we have enacted strict precautionary measures and have been assessing and updating our preparedness plan. Information is changing daily. As we work to provide a safe and healthy environment for our residents and staff, we wanted to share with you some additional steps we are taking.

Effective 4/6/2020, in accordance with new guidance from The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, all employees will be required to wear a face mask until further notice. This mandate is to help prevent the unknown spread of the virus and to protect vulnerable residents and caregivers from unknown exposure.

We want to be clear that the wearing of masks is an additional precautionary measure in our infection prevention efforts. The masks do not imply we have an active case of COVID-19 within our facilities. At this time, there are no known cases of COVID-19 among our staff or residents.

To ensure we maintain and conserve our supply, we must follow the CDC recommendations for extended use and reuse of masks. Staff will wear masks as follows:

- **All staff** will receive one mask per week for the duration of this event
- Staff will be responsible for their mask and will be required to store their masks in a brown paper bag which will be provided by Saint Mary's Home of Erie. If a staff member does not have their mask at the start of their shift, they will not be allowed to enter the building.
- Staff will continue to be required to enter through the employee entrance where they will have their temperature taken. They should then make every effort to proceed to a hand washing station before donning their mask and continuing with their work.

Please be aware that masks are only effective when used in combination with frequent hand-hygiene. Proper steps to wear and remove a mask include:

- To put on the mask, determine the top and front of the mask. The top will have a bendable edge meant to mold to the shape of your nose. The front of the mask will be colored and should face away from you. Hold the mask by the ear loops and place around each ear. Be sure the mask covers your mouth and nose and that there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching your mask while you are wearing it. If you touch the mask, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- To remove the mask, grab from behind (avoid touching the front of the mask) and place it in the storage bag.

To help better protect yourself and our residents, staff members are discouraged from walking through units on which they are not working. Staff should use alternate routes through the building to avoid walking through resident care areas when possible. We highly urge social distancing be observed during lunch hours and break times. To aid in this effort, additional tables have been placed and/or moved in designated break areas to limit the number of staff per table.

Staff should also be aware that families are not allowed to drop-off items for residents, including Easter baskets and gifts. Families are encouraged to send any items for loved ones through the USPS Mail, FedEx or UPS. Families and friends are being informed that window visitations will not be permitted. We have received reports of individuals attempting to remove screens and standing outside and looking through the wrong windows. This creates a huge security and privacy risk. Families are encouraged to make an appointment to videochat with their loved one.

If you have not yet done so, please review and update your emergency contact information with Human Resources. Also, please be sure to have on hand the Severe Weather/Travel Restriction Authorization Letter and your Employee ID Badge at all times. Human Resources can provide you with a copy of the letter should you need one.

As always, your Department Supervisor is here to help if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for the work you are doing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen L. Bonace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "B".

Allen L. Bonace, MSN/MBA, RN, NE-BC, NHA  
President/CEO