



Thursday, August 13, 2020

Dear Carriage Home Resident,

As you know, COVID-19 has drastically altered our typical ways of operating as a long-term care facility. Over the past few months we have worked hard to minimize exposure of the virus to residents and employees. As part of this effort, we have recently completed universal testing at both facilities and continue to meet all local, state and federal guidelines. As conditions allow, we will gradually begin entering a three-step reopening plan.

Reopening does not mean a complete return to normal operations. As we continue to operate under a number of restrictions, certain services made available to you as Carriage Home residents – such as dining, housekeeping and attending Mass in our chapel – will continue to be suspended at this time for your safety and the safety of other residents and employees.

Reopening, however, does allow for limited and controlled forms of visitation for families and residents. Following the guidance set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, a full “**Implementation Plan for Reopening**” document can be found on our website at [stmaryshome.org](http://stmaryshome.org). We encourage you to review the plan to familiarize yourself with our strategies. Please understand that guidance and regulations change frequently and the reopening plan is fluid. We expect this plan to change. We will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes by sharing updates on our website.

**Saint Mary’s at Asbury Ridge entered reopening on August 10<sup>th</sup>.** Asbury Ridge must achieve 14 days of no new facility onset of COVID-19 from this date before advancing directly to Step Two. If all goes accordingly, Asbury Ridge may advance to Step Two on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Keep in mind these dates are not set in stone. Each of the three reopening steps are briefly outlined below:

**Step One: No visitations**

No visitations will occur in step one except for compassionate care visits. If there is no new onset of COVID-19 for 14 consecutive days from the date we entered step one, we may advance to step two.

**Step Two: Outdoor visitations**

Visitations in step two will be held outside in the neighborhood patio areas nearest the parking lots. Shade structures will be available and in the event of inclement weather, visitation will be cancelled. If there is no new onset of COVID-19 for 14 consecutive days from the date we entered step two, we may advance to step three.

**Step Three: Indoor visitations in neutral zones**

Visitations in step three will be held inside in the main lobby areas which have been designated as a neutral zones. No visitation will occur in any resident areas. Visitations will continue in this manner until further notice.

If at any point during reopening there is a new facility onset of COVID-19 or if Erie County reverts back to the Red Phase, Saint Mary’s will halt all reopening plans and return to our restricted visitor policies. Should this occur, to enter reopening again the county must be in a yellow or green phase and we must meet all prerequisites and achieve 14 consecutive days of no new facility onset of COVID-19 before starting over at step one.

Some of the additional key points of this three-step reopening plan include:

- Allowing communal dining in a manner that observes social distancing and potentially utilizes staggered dining times during all steps of reopening
- Hosting small group activities with incremental increases in group size based on advancement through each step provided that residents can maintain social distancing
- Permitting non-essential personnel, hair dressers and volunteers limited entrance during steps two and three based upon certain precautions and conditions
- Continuing the use of universal masking, temperature screenings, frequent hand hygiene, education, and increased environmental cleaning during all steps

Visitations in step two and three must be scheduled in advance. Visitation will occur in designated visiting areas only and will not occur in any of the resident areas, rooms or windows at this time. Visitations will be supervised to ensure that social distancing is maintained and that all spaces are disinfected between visitors. Visitors will not be permitted to drop-off or exchange items during visitations. All visitors must wear a face mask and adhere to screening protocols.

At this time and subject to change, visits will be **twenty minutes in length** and limited to **two visitors per resident** during the following visiting hours:

Morning	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Afternoon	1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Evening	6:00 p.m. – 7: 30 p.m.

The Social Services Department will contact all families to schedule initial visits. Pre-screening will be conducted during the time of scheduling along with a review of what to expect during your visit and where to arrive. Due to high demand and to ensure that we can provide all families and residents with the opportunity to visit, visitations may be limited in frequency. Once all families have had an opportunity for an initial visit, additional visits will be considered.

To assist with visitation, **volunteers** will be permitted in steps two and three. Volunteers in step two will only be allowed to help with transporting residents for visitation, monitoring the visit, and disinfecting the area between visits. In step three, volunteers will continue to help with visitation and some normal volunteer duties may resume. All volunteers must undergo screening upon each entrance to the facility, wear a mask at all times, practice frequent hand hygiene and observe social distancing.

Please continue to use wise judgement in your personal lives. Wearing a face mask, frequent hand hygiene, and social distancing continue to be some of best ways to limit the spread of the virus and protect yourself against COVID-19.

We also encourage you to stay up to date with the travel advisory list shared on the Pennsylvania Department of Health's website:

[www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx)

If you have traveled or plan to travel to one of the named states or to an area with high amounts of COVID-19, it is recommended that you quarantine for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. Keep this in mind as you begin to consider inviting friends and family over or reconnecting with people who may have recently traveled. We appreciate being kept informed of any major travel plans.

If you develop symptoms of a respiratory illness (cough, fever, shortness of breath, etc.) you should self-quarantine and contact your primary care physician as soon as symptoms occur. We ask that you please let us know if you are being tested for COVID-19 so that we can take the appropriate next steps.

We are eager to see you reconnect in a way that is safe for all involved. As always, the focus of all we do is centered on the health and well-being of the people who live and work here. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding – both over the past few months and as we navigate the way forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen L. Bonace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Allen L. Bonace, MSN/MBA, RN, NE-BC, NHA  
President/CEO  
Saint Mary's Home of Erie