

This communication was sent in an email on June 18, 2020.

Saint Mary's & COVID-19: Update #14

We continue to be fortunate! Last week we reported that a second employee at Saint Mary's East tested positive for COVID-19. Eight individuals with known exposure were identified through contact tracing and all tested negative for COVID-19.

At this time, the East employee reported above is the only active COVID-19 case at Saint Mary's Home of Erie. Since the onset of this crisis, Saint Mary's has had two positive employee cases among the nearly 500 employees at East and Asbury Ridge. No cases of COVID-19 have been identified among residents at either campus.

As you know, Saint Mary's is planning to test all residents and employees for COVID-19. Universal testing is most effective when it is done in a compressed timeframe and when results are returned quickly. Due to the positive cases associated with Saint Mary's East, testing will begin first at the East campus, followed by Asbury Ridge.

Saint Mary's East

We have been in contact with our laboratory partner, Associated Clinical Laboratories (ACL). While they do have the testing capacity to meet our needs, the Pennsylvania Department of Health offered to conduct and underwrite the first round of testing. As a result, Saint Mary's East will partner with the Pennsylvania National Guard who will provide initial testing assistance and resources. A 12 member team will conduct testing as well as supply testing materials, personal protective equipment, medical personnel, and access to prompt laboratory results. Testing at Saint Mary's East is scheduled for June 22nd and June 23th. Due to the active employee case at Saint Mary's East, we are also required to continue testing everyone at least weekly for 14 days after the most recent positive test result until testing identifies no new cases. Testing of all residents and staff will be repeated on June 29th and June 30th. All subsequent testing will be handled by Saint Mary's staff members.

Saint Mary's at Asbury Ridge

Although Saint Mary's at Asbury Ridge has remained free of the virus so far, testing is still vital. We have discussed testing with ACL and they have determined dates for when they can supply testing materials and process results in a timely manner. Testing at Saint Mary's at Asbury Ridge is currently scheduled for July 16th and July 17th. If a positive case is associated with Asbury Ridge before those dates, we will coordinate testing as soon as possible. All testing at Asbury Ridge will be handled by Saint Mary's staff members.

The Carriage Homes at Asbury Ridge

Independent living residents in the Carriage Homes will not be tested. The state guidelines direct that testing must be done for employees and residents within the building but it does not address independent living. Carriage Home residents are directed to contact their primary care physician if they feel sick or have concerns related to testing.

Overall, we are coordinating testing for nearly 800 employees and residents. This is likely not a one-time occurrence. We are working to get consent for testing from each resident/POA. If any positive results are received, we will notify you.

We also understand that hearing the term “National Guard” may sound alarming. Please be assured their involvement is a matter of access to resources and does not mean that Saint Mary’s has an outbreak. We are grateful to partner with members of the Pennsylvania National Guard to ensure that our residents and employees have access to the resources needed for their protection!

If you have any concerns, please let us know. We appreciate your cooperation and support!