



April 29, 2020

Dear Residents & Family Members,

Greetings from Friends House. We hope all is well with you.

As you know from our previous communications, Friends House has had a number of positive COVID-19 cases between residents and staff. We also went the extra mile and recently tested every one of our healthcare residents, both in the nursing home area as well as the assisted living area. We further tested virtually all of our staff in an effort to isolate any potential carrier by sending them home to quarantine, requiring those positive testing staff to be symptom free for two weeks before returning to work in accordance with their personal physician orders (note: conflicting advice from govt entities suggested only 7-10 days).

Testing so many as we did was well above and beyond the call of duty as the powers to be told us to only test those showing noticeable symptoms of the virus. In fact, after our third resident tested positive at the hospital, we were only provided two tests for residents that we were monitoring (they both turned out negative). Because we felt that was woefully insufficient to control any spread of the virus, we purchased another 180 tests ourselves so we could test as indicated above. And glad we did. We have uncovered thirteen staff who tested positive, most of whom had no symptoms and would not have realized they were positive if we had not tested all staff. Of course, all were promptly sent home to quarantine as noted above. A few have developed symptoms after being home, so their quarantine timeframe is being extended accordingly. Most remained symptom free. All staff are expected to return back to work, recovered. We are deeply saddened by the loss of the spouse of one of our staff.

We have also had seventeen residents test positive, all in the nursing home area. A number of these have also had no symptoms, and would not have known if we had not gone the extra mile to test everyone. Others, however, have shown some symptoms; though often light. And sadly, four of the residents who tested positive for coronavirus have passed. However, we are not certain to what extent, if any, the coronavirus had in their passing. For example, one of these residents was already on hospice, and all four residents had co-morbidities, meaning other complex health issues. Nevertheless, the state and CDC counts them as COVID-19 deaths. Regardless, each of these residents were very special people who remain in the hearts and minds of our staff and other residents here at Friends House. Every life here matters, and we both mourn and celebrate the lives of those who shared their experience with us.

We continue to monitor very closely all our residents, with an extra special eye on those with COVID-19. We have begun re-testing residents who previously tested positive, and we are now beginning to get some negative tests from those residents previously testing positive. Before these residents are cleared from the virus, though, they must test negative twice. So we'll update you on this in future correspondence.

We also require our staff to check in every day, i.e., temperature and questionnaire. Visitors are not coming into the healthcare areas, not family members and not residents from our independent living areas. We are cleaning multiple times a day. Overtime has skyrocketed as we spare no useful expense to protect everyone to the best extent we can, as some staff are now unavailable and we are being extremely careful about who we bring in to work in hopes of keeping the virus away. Independent living residents have been making us backup gowns and masks, as N95 masks and gowns are hard to come by. A recent shipment was intercepted.

We realize how hard it is to not be able to visit your family member. We are thankful for staff who are so caring and compassionate. As a reminder, please note we now have the option of Face Time and Skype to contact your loved one.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of our five-star healthcare team. This is a challenging time for all, yet also an opportunity for us to shine in providing our best service and care to the wonderful people who live here.

All of our staff members continue to follow public health recommendations to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. These include strict handwashing procedures, and in many circumstances, wearing facemasks, gowns, and gloves when interacting with residents who are sick. As you know, there are well documented shortages, so our team has been very resourceful in obtaining all we can and creatively adjusting where needed for the safety and welfare of the resident.

Some have asked how they can help. If you feel so inclined and would like to contribute to helping our team during this time of the coronavirus, please contact Anne Derby at 301-924-7510 or aderby@friendshouse.com, or go to this link: <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/Giv3>.

We will update our COVID19 section of our website as new information is available.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding. We continue to work with The Maryland Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local health departments in monitoring the outbreak of the virus, COVID-19.

Friends House Management