



May 13, 2020

Residents, Family Members and Neighbors,

We hope this communication finds you and your loved ones well and safe. As part of our efforts to continually keep you informed of the impact COVID-19 is having on operations at Villages of Lake Highlands we wanted to make you aware of recent requirements imposed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission “HHSC” which will affect you and/or your loved one and other pertinent operational matters.

On Monday, May 11, 2020 Governor Abbott instructed HHSC and other state health agencies to implement a plan to quickly test all nursing home residents and staff across the state of Texas, consistent with guidance from Vice President Pence and Medical Ambassador-At-Large Deborah Brix, M.D. While the state’s efforts to ensure compliance are being finalized, Villages of Lake Highlands will now implement our plan for wide scale COVID-19 testing within the facility.

Beginning Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Villages of Lake Highlands will test all residents and employees for COVID-19. As part of our seemingly never ending contingency planning, Villages of Lake Highlands previously contracted with a third party lab to provide large scale testing capabilities when called upon. The test we procured is the gold standard test utilizing a dual swab collection protocol and is based on detecting the virus’ DNA. Each of these factors should reduce the number of false positive and false negative test results. Rather than have the test administered to you or your loved one by an unknown public health official, we will utilize our most senior nurse managers to conduct the test. The nurse managers will be fully covered in personal protective equipment. Although collecting a sample within the nasal cavity is not painful, it is unpleasant. We believe utilizing a familiar face will help reduce any anxiety our residents may feel. Another attribute of the lab company we selected is results are expected within thirty-six hours versus other labs which take three to ten days to return test results.

We are generally supportive of industry wide testing of high risk populations and those working in senior healthcare and senior housing facilities to protect the most vulnerable among us. At the present time, we are unaware of any residents or employees with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. But as I am sure you have seen in the media the most difficult challenge associated with SARS-COV-2, the virus which causes the disease COVID-19, is its ability to ‘hide’ within asymptomatic carriers. Testing approximately one hundred ten residents and approximately one hundred thirty staff members may in fact turn up positive cases. We commit to informing all residents and all family point of contacts within six hours of being notified of a positive test, as we pray for all test results to be negative.

We also want to let you know of other operational changes we are implementing as we continue to refine our COVID-19 mitigation strategy. With Dallas County beginning to open its economy more non-essential though highly beneficial medical procedures will be resuming. As a result, our admission activity may increase over the next thirty to forty-five days. Though admissions may increase we will remain vigilant in our fight against COVID-19. All new admissions will be required to provide a recent negative COVID-19 test result prior to admission. Furthermore, all new admissions will continue to be segregated to our isolation areas within facility with a requirement to be COVID-19 symptom free for fourteen days prior to being moved into any other area of the facility



as has been our practice for several weeks. With our new testing capabilities, we will now also test all new admissions on day four and on day eleven to further screen for signs of SARS-COV-2 within the facility.

While our war against COVID-19 continues and continually wears on our team of caregivers, I do want to take this opportunity to share some wonderful highlights from the past few days:

- On Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>, the local Lake Highlands Girl Scout troop (Service Unit #165) encouraged our facility by conducting a May Day parade featuring a May Day pole, cool cars, wonderful signs, thoughtful notes, and lots of youthful energy which brightened our day. These girls have adopted our facility as their ongoing service project, and we cherish the relationship we have established with these special girls.
- On Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, the Lowes home improvement store located at Northwest Highway and Jupiter Road delivered hundreds of fresh flowers to our residents in celebration of Mother's Day. The company's incredible thoughtfulness was a blessing to all the mothers in the building.
- From Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup> through today we celebrated National Nurse's Week. At Villages of Lake Highlands, we celebrate all positions critical to providing quality care to our residents including our nurses, caregivers, dietary team, therapists, housekeepers, and administrative team. We are proud of our team and the job they do each day. Please feel free to reach out on our social media channels to express your thanks or drop a note off at the building for your favorite caregiver.
- If you have not previously done so, please 'like' our Facebook and Instagram pages to keep abreast of the many happenings going on at the facility. Even in these challenging times, we still find ways to have fun, celebrate our seniors, and honor their legacies.

Again, as we say in each letter, we greatly appreciate your patience. We know that this is as hard and stressful on families as it is on our team. We are grateful for the confidence and faith you have placed in us and we appreciate the wonderful partnership we have with our families. You all are very special to us, and your kind words inspire us to do our best each day.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding our COVID-19 testing protocols, please contact Executive Director Kelly Wolfe or Chelsea Sneed, Director of Nursing.

Villages of Lake Highlands Team