



V I L L A G E S

o f L A K E H I G H L A N D S

REHABILITATION • SKILLED NURSING • LONG TERM CARE • MEMORY CARE

March 4, 2021

Residents, VOLH Team, Family Members and Neighbors,

We hope everyone is enjoying the warm sunshine for a change, and if you had property damage or a disruption in your utility service from the winter storm that your lives are now somewhat back to normal. VOLH managed to get through the storm without any difficulties other than our team's challenge of getting to and from work each day. We cannot thank them enough for their dedication to our mission. Multiple members of our leadership team and direct care staff spent several days away from their families in a nearby hotel or sleeping on site to assure care for our residents during the emergency. Others braved the elements each day and several of our team member volunteered to provide transportation to others who could not drive or get out of their neighborhoods. This degree of dedication to residents is not common and we are blessed with our teams' collective outstanding culture of service to our community's vulnerable seniors. The power at VOLH remained on for the duration of the storm, likely due to our close proximity to a Dallas Fire Department station. Furthermore, our building was well designed, and our attic largely consists of conditioned (i.e. insulated / heated) space. As a result the temperature did not drop below 60 degrees in the attic which helped to protect our water supply and fire sprinkler system. Additionally, while we were fortunate to not need it, our facility has a very large generator which runs the building's emergency circuitry, food storage appliances, and common area HVAC units. Our Emergency Preparedness protocols in place were enacted and a post emergency evaluation conducted reveals our systems were effective in all areas. We remain prepared for power disruption and regularly monitor our emergency preparedness through our internal Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement program, but are thankful we did not have to rely on our redundant power supply last week.

The primary purpose of this correspondence is to address comments made by Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Tuesday, Mach 2nd. In a news conference and related press release Governor Abbot issued "*Executive Order (GA-34) lifting the mask mandate in Texas and increasing capacity of all businesses and facilities in the state to 100 percent...*". We are pleased with the arrival of now three effective COVID-19 vaccines and encourage anyone who fits the stated criteria to be vaccinated so that our community and country can achieve herd immunity and begin to move past the global pandemic. We are also pleased to see the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations decline with increased ICU bed capacity at area hospitals as we get further from the holiday season. We believe we are on the right course to hopefully return to some degree of normalcy in 2021.

Having said that, please note the Governor's re-opening order which allows much of the state's commerce to return to a pre-COVID-19 operating posture explicitly states "*Nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, and long term care facilities should follow guidance from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) regarding visitations, and should follow infection control policies and practices set forth by HHSC, ...*". The Texas HHSC is VOLH's primary state regulatory authority, and they have reiterated to all senior health care facilities that there are currently no changes in COVID-19 related operating protocols at this time. Therefore, for the safety of our residents and valued team members we will continue with the requirements contained within various Emergency Orders we remain subject to related to COVID-19. These measures include but are not limited to: limiting visitations to essential care providers, strictly enforcing proper mask wearing for



V I L L A G E S

o f L A K E H I G H L A N D S

REHABILITATION • SKILLED NURSING • LONG TERM CARE • MEMORY CARE

anyone within the facility, prohibiting the gathering of residents or employees in large groups, utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment, and continuing with enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices.

We also would like to report that we achieved over a 90% resident vaccination rate and 80% employee vaccination rate, both well above industry averages and hope this will give us yet another tool to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. Also, we anticipate having our own small supply of COVID-19 vaccinations in the coming weeks so that we may continue to vaccinate new resident admissions and new employees within our facility who have not otherwise been vaccinated.

We will be sure to update you with additional information as circumstances change relating to COVID-19 protocols and/or any state or federal regulatory policy changes. Thank you for your support over the past year in these challenging times. We are cautiously optimistic things will continue to improve as we move through 2021. Please feel free to contact Executive Director Kelly Wolfe and Director of Nursing Chelsea Sneed with any questions.

Villages of Lake Highlands Team