



Covenant Living Special Update **Terri Cunliffe / May 22, 2020**

Hello, I'm Terri Cunliffe, president and CEO of Covenant Living.

Since the last video update two weeks ago, there have been more changes to the Coronavirus guidelines from health officials across the country. As an organization, we continue to stay up-to-date on new guidelines and recommendations for retirement communities and healthcare facilities.

Community Testing

As we look forward to re-opening, we have received numerous questions regarding COVID-19 testing for all employees and residents. Based on recommendations from State and Local health officials, Covenant Living has prepared a plan for testing residents and employees in Skilled Nursing, Assisted Living and Memory Care at all of our communities. Despite reports about the broad availability of test kits, it is still challenging in some markets to access testing. We are actively seeking guidance in this area from health officials, as we work to complete testing by June 5.

Testing our residents and staff provides us a baseline of current COVID positive cases, and helps to identify asymptomatic residents and employees. I expect we will see an uptick in positive cases as we complete testing, but be assured, we will continue to report positive cases to you and your family members. But keep in mind, testing is only representative of a specific moment in time. By the time a test result is returned, it is already out of date. This is the most challenging aspect of this virus. For a community to be deemed truly "virus free," it would require daily testing of all residents and staff, but there are simply not enough test kits available, nor would most residents and staff be willing to be tested daily.

Community Update

Many of you have friends and family around the country who live in Covenant Living communities, and I know you are interested in how other communities are being impacted by the virus. At present, 10 of our 17 communities have experienced COVID-19 cases, with the majority of the cases still in Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living. The virus has had little impact on Residential Living. In fact, of our nearly 5,100 Residential Living residents, there has been only five positive cases reported, and all have fully recovered! This is a testimony to the

commitment by our staff and residents to the safety protocols we implemented at the very beginning of this journey.

In my earlier updates I mentioned Windsor Park, and I am happy to report the number of cases there has dropped dramatically. However, as one community stabilizes, other “hot spots” can pop up. This week, Covenant Living of Golden Valley has experienced a number of new COVID-19 cases in Skilled Nursing. We have deployed additional resources to support the dedicated and capable healthcare team at that community. Please keep all of our communities in your prayers at this time, but especially Golden Valley. Our courageous leaders and staff are working tirelessly to fight this virus.

Plans for Re-opening

Even as we continue to fight the virus, we are also planning for the re-opening of services and amenities at all of our communities. Many of you have expressed your frustration with being separated from loved ones, and I am very aware of how difficult it has been and continues to be for you. If you live in Residential Living, you’ll have the opportunity to connect with loved one’s sooner than residents in Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing. After ten weeks of physical distancing, home-delivered meals and Facetime visits, I am excited to offer some “summertime encouragement”.

We have spent several weeks planning the Phases of Reopening at Covenant Living, and our plan is to begin the first phase on June 8. So what does that look like? Without a doubt, our top priority is the SAFETY of all residents and employees. Because of that, re-opening will occur at a very slow and methodical pace.

In Residential Living, starting June 8, we will offer take-out service for those of you who would rather pick up your meals than have them delivered. Yes, we will still practice physical distancing and wear masks, and we will continue to deliver meals as desired, but it’s a chance to get out of your apartment. However, dining rooms and private dining rooms will remain closed.

Also starting June 8, we will allow immediate family to visit loved ones who reside in Residential Living. A maximum of three guests will be allowed per visit, and all guests will be required to complete the health screening as they enter the community. Guests and residents will be required to wear masks when traveling through common areas, and no overnight visits or gathering in common areas or lobbies is allowed. All guests must remain in the resident apartment and practice appropriate physical distancing. Finally, guests will not be allowed to visit Skilled Nursing or Assisted Living until a later date.

Starting June 15, the barber shops and beauty salons will re-open by appointment only with certain restrictions, including masks and no more than two people in the salon at the same time. Additional guidelines will be communicated before re-opening this service. Personally, I cannot wait for hair salons to re-open!

Also starting June 15, we will provide limited transportation for trips to the grocery store. Again, masks will be required. Seating will be limited to one resident per every other row to assure physical distancing is maintained, and bus schedules will be adjusted to allow for cleaning between trips.

We expect to open additional services in Phase Two, beginning in early July, including dining rooms with limited seating, fitness centers with capacity restrictions, and libraries, game rooms and computer labs, also with limited capacity.

Please keep in mind, our plan to reopen services and amenities will not always align with State or Local plans. I understand the inconvenience and frustration you have experienced during the lockdown — I have found it challenging too — but we cannot afford to lower our guard haphazardly, and give this virus opportunity. Remember, our first COVID-19 case entered our community through an asymptomatic family member. So, if at any point during our re-opening we experience a spike in positive cases at your community, we will suspend services and return to lockdown again.

Each phase of re-opening is contingent on training employees in new practices and the completion of performance drills to assure we open safely. Our most important goal is your safety and that of our employees. And together, in time, we will find our new-normal.

To help you understand our approach to re-opening, you will receive by the end of the month a detailed outline of the Covenant Living Reopening Plan. Specific details will be provided by your Executive Director in advance of the re-opening date for each service or amenity.

Reflections

My husband and I are part of a bible study on Zoom and this past week the topic was “Where Is God in the Midst of Suffering?” I couldn’t believe we were studying suffering in the middle of this COVID-19 pandemic, but this study reminded me that God never promised we wouldn’t experience hardship. But he did promise to never leave us.

I love the New Living Translation of Romans 5: 3-5. “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And

this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

So, when we are challenged and in the midst of suffering. Give Him your burden. Surrender. Then rest in His peace.

Thank you and I will see you again in two weeks.