



## **Special Update on Coronavirus Efforts**

Terri Cunliffe / March 13, 2020

### **Introduction**

The news regarding the coronavirus is rapidly changing. We have continued to stay on top of the latest information from local and national health authorities and our community leadership to assure we are addressing the coronavirus within established protocols.

The focus of this update is to inform you of the changes we are making to our day-to-day operations as we step up our efforts to limit the impact of the virus within our communities.

### **Visitors in Skilled Nursing & Assisted Living**

Let's start with a change to the previously communicated visitors and guest policy, especially at Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living.

In a proactive manner and an abundance of caution to minimize exposure of the virus, beginning Saturday, March 14, through Tuesday, March 31, all Covenant Living communities will implement a No Visitor Policy to Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living.

This visitor restriction is for everyone—even residents residing in Residential Living. If you live in Residential Living and have a spouse in either Skilled Nursing or Assisted Living, during this restricted visitation period, you will not be allowed to visit. In lieu of visiting, we will be happy to arrange a virtual visit via skype or

facetime with your loved one. Our campus field service engineers will help to coordinate the virtual visits. The only exception to this restriction will be for residents who are in the “end-stage -of-life” at which time you will be notified by the nursing staff or administration. We absolutely understand this is contrary to prior communications and our common purpose of creating joy and peace of mind, but in our committed efforts to limit exposure to the most vulnerable people in our communities, we must limit all visitors.

### **Visitors in Residential Living**

Our residents also play a most important role in helping limit the chance of this virus from entering our communities.

Therefore, we are asking residents to do their part by self-restricting personal guests and visitors from the community until all visitor restrictions are lifted. This request is for all visitors, including family members because anyone can be a carrier of the virus, even without showing signs of illness. This is an additional preventive measure and precautionary step to protect all Residential Living residents and staff from unnecessary exposure. Keep in mind the CDC has said the most vulnerable demographic for getting very sick from this virus are those age 60 and over... and those with underlying health issues. We take that seriously and we need you to as well!

### **Health Screening**

In addition to restricting visitors, we will implement health screenings for all health care employees and workers prior to beginning their shifts. Screenings will include a questionnaire and likely temperature screening. Some communities

have already begun both. Any residential residents with personal caregivers coming to your apartment, it is critical for you to ask them questions every day upon their arrival:

1. Are they exhibiting any flu-like symptoms?
2. Have they been in contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?
3. Have they traveled out of the country within the past 14 days?

If a resident suspects a personal caregiver is not well, please contact the community nursing staff so they can help.

There will continue to be a limited number of contractors working at our communities but only as necessary. We have canceled many construction projects where we cannot limit interaction with residents and/or staff. However, all contractors will also be screened.

### **Marketing Events & Other Community Gatherings**

In addition to postponing all marketing events until mid-April, we have decided to eliminate all on-site individual sales appointments at all communities until at least March 31. Our sales representatives will continue meeting with prospective residents outside of our community or by phone.

Large scale events at our communities may be postponed or even canceled. To start, we have asked the chaplains to provide chapel services for all residents at all levels of living through the in-house television at their regularly scheduled times for the next two weeks. That means there will be no in-person chapel services considered until after March 31. Off-site clergy and services will not be allowed on campus during the time we are restricting visitors.

By mid-next week we will close down residential and assisted living dining rooms. Residential dining will be replaced with a limited menu and offer meals for pick up or delivery based on your ability. Assisted living and skilled nursing dining will be delivered individually.

These changes sound drastic and maybe even unnecessary, but we are following the advice of local and national health authorities to minimize the impact of the virus to residents and staff.

### **Planning for a Positive Diagnosis**

Despite all of the preventive measures, it should be expected we will experience the coronavirus in our communities.

In the event a resident or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will immediately quarantine the individual at home and notify the local and state health authorities. In addition, we will determine how much contact the affected individual has had with others at the community. Once those individuals are identified, they will also be asked to self-isolate at home for 14-days and monitor themselves for any potential symptoms. An information letter will be sent to all residents and staff upon the first notification of an active case in the community.

One individual diagnosed with the virus can impact many and that is why we need to minimize the number of people visiting our communities. We cannot control what happens outside of our communities – where people go or who they interact with, so we are adding these additional protocols to control what we can on the inside of our communities. As you can imagine, we are closely monitoring the staffing impact closely to assure we maintain adequate staff on site.

We are continuing with all infectious disease control protocols to aid in the virus from spreading throughout the community.

### **Working Together**

Our top priority is the health and well-being of all residents and staff. That too, should be a top priority for everyone.

We are emphasizing, if residents have any symptoms of an illness, please stay in their apartments, contact their physician and let a community nursing team know so they can help.

If any employee has any signs of illness, they are asked to please stay home.

Our promise is to keep everyone informed. We are in unprecedented times. Together, with support, patience, and prayers, we strive to remain a community that is minimally impacted by the coronavirus.

### **Conclusion**

Let us remember Paul's words of encouragement in Philippians 4:6 and 7: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

There is so much we don't know and can't answer about the coronavirus or how long this will continue, but the leadership and staff that serve our residents every day are committed to keeping them and our communities as coronavirus free as

we can. Please continue to pray for those individuals and families who have already been affected by the virus and for continued health for those who haven't.

On behalf of all the leaders and staff of Covenant Living communities, what a blessing it is to be of service to our residents through these uncertain days. Thank you for your prayers, support and the powerful words of encouragement you continually share with the leaders and staff who serve you day in and day out!

Thank you!