



April 3, 2020

Dear Families,

As Rhode Island and local communities deal with the coronavirus pandemic, we want to provide you with an update on how it has impacted our community and the steps we're taking to address it. The safety of our residents and staff is a top priority and our dedicated staff are doing everything possible to maintain safe and quality care during this time.

Here is just a quick summary of the dozens of aggressive measures taken to promote safety. Prior to each shift, staff are required to wash their hands, take their temperature and answer a series of questions to ensure they are not exhibiting any known COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to anyone tested positive for Covid-19. All staff in resident contact are wearing masks as well. Employees also take their temperatures at the conclusion of their shift. Any employees who develop symptoms during a shift are immediately sent home. At that point, they are directed to quarantine at home. This process is also followed for outside vendors, though these visits have been severely curtailed unless absolutely medically necessary.

We also conduct a rigorous sanitation regimen that follows, or exceeds, all state and federal guidelines. We have increased the daily volume of cleaning done in common, medical and residential areas. All protective and medical equipment are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Yet despite all of our precautions, we have unfortunately felt the virus's direct effects here at Ballou. We currently have 1 COVID-19 case. When a resident tests positive for COVID-19, we take great care to ensure they're made comfortable in an isolated setting and are under constant supervision. While caring for residents in isolation, staff wear full protective equipment, including medical gowns, gloves, eye protection and masks, and are restricted to working solely in their units. We will also work with the Health Department to have all residents and staff who may have been in contact with the resident be tested.

Any staff members working in our facility who have tested positive are quarantined at home. We're currently following the "Criteria for Return to Work for Health Care Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19" guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are also working with the Health Department to have all residents and staff who may have been in contact with the staff be tested.

As the number of overall cases in our country and RI increase exponentially, we expect there will be additional cases at our facility because this disease especially impacts people who live in nursing homes.

Please know that we have followed, and will continue to do so, all guidance set forth for patient care, employee safety, and efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 as provided by the RI Department of Health (DOH) and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and we remain in constant contact with DOH.

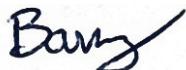
Although this can be a challenge at times when providing medical care, our facility continues to practice safe distancing guidelines by limiting the number of people in one area and maintaining 6 feet of separation and mandating no grouping larger than 5 people. Doors are shut in common areas to discourage group gatherings. Our dining room is now closed for communal dining, but meals are being delivered to the residents in their rooms.

While we strive for transparency in everything we do, please know that we are also bound by federal guidelines under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which protect the privacy of our residents. Our medical director follows all established federal laws in notifying families of any change in the medical condition of their loved ones. Our residents are our first priority.

We appreciate your understanding as we continue to vigorously enforce the state's decision to restrict all visits into the facility at this time. This is certainly frustrating when wanting to see loved ones, but we want to do everything in our power to keep our residents healthy. We continue to encourage family members to communicate regularly through FaceTime or Skype calls, phone calls, and emails. For more information on scheduling virtual visitation for the residents, please contact Tina at (508)215-4954.

We will continue to provide you with periodic updates with as much information as we can on our efforts to combat COVID-19. On behalf of the entire Ballou Home/ BallouLife Communities, I want to thank each of you for your continued patience and prayers. It means a great deal to us. You may call me on my cell phone at (401)487-3886 with any questions at any time or Jocelyn, our Director of Social Services at (401)626-1365.

Sincerely,



Barry B. Zeltzer, PhD
Executive Director