

Facebook Covid-19 Update #11

July 24, 2020

BallouLife Communities continues with weekly testing of staff for Covid-19 per Rhode Island Department of Health Guidelines (RIDOH). All staff have tested negative from the July 9, 2020 testing. The results from July 17, 2020 are trickling in and are again all negative at this time. We are still experiencing a lag in receiving results from the lab. RIDOH is aware of this and are working diligently to bring other labs on-board to help with the processing of the swabs. Lifespan labs have been added to testing providers to help with this shortfall. It is an anxious time for us all as we await our results. We have all remained healthy and no one has been sent for interim testing.

The CDC has updated the return to work criteria for Health Care Personnel (HCP) that have tested positive. "Except for rare situations, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to determine when to allow HCP to return to work. For HCP with severe to critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised, the recommended duration for work exclusion was extended to 20 days after symptom onset (or, for asymptomatic severely immunocompromised HCP, 20 days after their initial positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test). Other symptom based criteria were modified as follows: Changed from at least 72 hours to at least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and changed from improvement in respiratory symptoms to improvement in symptoms to address expanding list of symptoms associated with Covid-19.

Our staff member that had tested positive has definitely surpassed this criteria, but as she was swabbed last week and her test result is negative, she will be returning to work shortly. The staff member that had been exposed to a Covid-19 positive person has been in self-isolation and has shown no signs or symptoms of illness. She was also tested last week and her results were negative; she will be returning to work as well. The guidelines for this have also been shortened from 14 days to 10 days. The staff member that had flown out of the country has also been swabbed as was the nurse who had been on a leave of absence; neither have shown any signs or symptoms, and will be returning to work once their tests come back.

It is an ever evolving scenario. As we learn more and more about the symptomology and disease process of Covid-19, the guidelines we live by are updated and absorbed into our daily lives. This Covid-19 pandemic will not defeat us, we remain resolute in protecting our BallouLife family and community.

Visitations continue to go well. The POAs have provided additional relatives and friends permission to visit, and the residents are extremely pleased with their time spent with them. The smiles when they come back to the unit are priceless and the mood is electric. They look forward to their next visit; it has really helped their demeanor, zest for life and appetite to be

able to see their family and friends. I must ask once again not to bring in food for the residents. We cannot allow this for the time being, as some of them are on restricted diet textures and fluid modifications. FaceTime visits continue and remain a valuable tool that we have in our arsenal, but the in-person visits are gold.

We have signed the contract with the new podiatry group and will be moving forward with visits. The staff continue to impress me with their hair styling capabilities and a lot of the residents are actually enjoying having their hair a bit longer. We are still awaiting guidelines from the state for the dental visits but have been in touch with our provider.

We have had some of the residents asking for communion and do not have a proper procedure for having this occur. We have reached out to RIDOH for guidance and to some other facilities. The ones we have been in touch with have not restarted communion either. I know this is a very important aspect of the resident's spiritual well-being and I hopefully will have some further guidance next week. Tina has been doing morning prayers and rosary every day. She also, this week, did a socially-distanced rosary in the chapel, and beautiful pictures of the rosary and stain-glass windows were posted on Facebook. Additionally, she has provided CD players and CDs with the rosary for the residents to listen to at their leisure. We are doing our best to provide for the mind, body and spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Daly, RN,
Infection Preventionist