

## Covid-19 Facebook Update #54

June 4, 2021

BallouLife Communities is on an on week for Covid-19 testing. Based on the current positivity rate of 0.60 percent statewide and 0.95 percent for Providence County, we currently remain on an every other week testing for unvaccinated residents and staff. We are testing monthly for vaccinated staff. If the residents are fully vaccinated they are exempt from testing. Therefore, having stated that, we have swabbed our staff and residents this week. The swabs have been picked up by the lab and are in process as I write. The good news from the prior week's testing is that everyone was negative. Let us hope this trend continues.

Thirteen of our residents received their second dose of the Moderna vaccine on May 24, 2021. Fortunately they had very few side effects and those that did, the symptoms were mild and lasted less than twenty-four hours. One additional resident that had previously declined the vaccine received her first dose on that date as well. Eight of our staff received their second dose too. On June 7, 2021 our residents will be 92 percent fully vaccinated and once the second dose is given to our most recent resident convert, we will be 96 percent vaccinated. Our staff is slowly coming along. All of my gentle, maybe not so gentle nudging has pushed us over the 75 percent vaccination rate. We will be 77.5 percent fully vaccinated on June 7, 2021. These numbers for residents and staff will fluctuate as more residents are admitted and as staff are either hired or leave. Here's hoping that the numbers remain on the upside.

Visitation has changed somewhat. We are still scheduling the visits as it allows us to control the traffic in the facility. Our population is very vulnerable and we are doing our best to keep them safe. I totally understand how frustrating this is. Covid-19 has been ugly, there is no other way to put it. We were decimated by this virus. The residents are survivors but they have been changed by this disease. Their stamina and conditioning has taken a hit, we have worked with therapy to get them better but it has been a long hard year and time has taken its own toll.

My staff has been hit hard too, not only did it hurt them health-wise it has hit us mentally. Speaking personally, having worked through the whole crisis, my mental health took a beating. I have rebounded but the toll is still there. Having broached this, I know a lot of you want to take your loved ones out. We are by no means discouraging this, just understand they may tire much more easily and physically not be able to last for a long visit. Try to be patient, take them out for an hour or so and build up their tolerance. We continue to offer the visits here at the facility seven days a week. We encourage, weather permitting, outdoor visits. Please also understand that as the hot hazy humid weather starts to return this also may affect outdoor visits as breathing and just plain old being comfortable come into play. Again, not trying to discourage this, just raising awareness.

We are allowing in-room visitation for a maximum of two visitors as long as the resident and the visitors are fully vaccinated. At this time we have no shared rooms so there is not an issue but as we admit more residents, we will have to look at the semantics of the in-room visitation. You must still maintain the core principles of infection prevention and limit your visit to your loved ones room only. I know you would love to see the other residents as we have always been a close community but at this time it is only your loved one that you may visit with.

The preference is for visiting outdoors or in our designated area. Having the residents visiting outside of their rooms is beneficial. They have been so isolated over the past year it has been hard to convince them to leave the confines of their room. Just coming to the designated area or outdoors provides a change of scenery and allows them to see that life is getting better. Our dining room is fully open and we are definitely encouraging the residents to come and dine together. The tables have been reconfigured to be more conducive for conversation.

Activities continues to encourage the residents to come to joint settings. Again, this has been quite difficult as they have become entrenched in remaining in their rooms. I do see more and more glimmers of hope. The musical entertainment has been a big factor in eliciting a communal response. Tina and her staff continue to motivate and inspire the resident's participation. We are returning to normal but at a very slow rate.

As always, mask (if required), wash your hands, socially distance (as required) and as you increase your social circle, be safe. The ultimate goal is to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy. I also encourage you to get the vaccine if you have not received it already as this has allowed us the current loosening of constraints.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Daly, RN

Infection Preventionist