THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY UPDATE
Tuesday, November 24, 2020
5:00 PM

Dear Gurwin Residents and Family Members:

Late this morning, all Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities throughout New York State received formalized guidance from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) regarding requirements for residents who leave the facility for home or family visitation or for a social outing, including holiday celebrations. You can find the full text of the letter through the link below, but there are some key points to know if visits outside of our facility are being considered during this holiday season. As a reminder, these are mandatory requirements issued by the NYSDOH and must be followed strictly, without exception:

- Firstly, NYS DOH and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recommend against residents leaving nursing homes or assisted living facilities for home or family visitation or other social outings during the holiday season. Data has shown that small family gatherings contribute to COVID-19 spread. The CDC and NYSDOH recommend that individuals at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid in-person gatherings with individuals with whom they do not live.

- If a resident leaves for home or family visitation or for a social outing, the following infection prevention and control measures must be followed outside the facility in order for the resident to return to our community for the safety of other residents and staff:
  - Limiting close contact with others (maintaining physical distancing of 6 feet or more).
  - Avoiding large gatherings and keeping gatherings as small as possible.
  - Using technology to engage with others remotely.
  - Wearing facemasks or cloth coverings to the extent possible.
  - Performing frequent hand hygiene.
  - Avoiding sharing of communal food or drinks.

- If a resident and/or family are unwilling to abide by the strong recommendations of the NYDOH and CMS to avoid holiday gatherings, the following protocols must be followed -- in addition to the above recommendations -- in order to return to our community:
  - Quarantine or minimize contact to the extent safely possible prior to their return to the facility.
  - Quarantine in their apartment upon return to our community for a period of 14 days -- on transmission-based precautions. During this time, residents will not be allowed to leave their apartments other than for medical reasons and all staff entering the apartment must wear protective equipment such as n95 masks, gowns and face shields.
• Test negative immediately (within 24 hours) prior to returning to our community. Please also be advised that residents will not be permitted to return to the community until they present the negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result within the preceding 24 hours.

• Be tested at least 3 times during the 14-day quarantine period at our assisted living community, including on the first day (upon return) and the last day that a resident must be quarantined. Please note that this does not include the negative test required for prior to return. In order for a resident to resume activities in the general areas of the assisted living community, negative results of the third test will be required.

Furthermore, if a resident leaves our community for the reasons stated in the DOH Health Advisory, the leaving resident and a family or friend must attest in writing that they are aware of and will abide by the terms outlined in this advisory. If a family or friend is unable or unwilling to do so, the resident cannot leave the community.

We completely understand that these restrictions may cause families to make last minute changes to their holiday preparations; please know that we sympathize with you and understand how the DOH guidelines have complicated plans. It remains our Number One priority to ensure that our family members and residents have all the information necessary to make informed decisions, and most importantly to remain safe and healthy throughout these very challenging times.

Please reach out directly to members of our team for clarification or any questions regarding the information contained in this communication.

Wishing our best to you and your families for a healthy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

Michael Letter
Administrator/COO

Click here to see the full communication from the NYS DOH regarding holiday gatherings for residents of nursing homes or adult care facilities.

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