Dear Gurwin Residents and Family Members:

We are required by the NY State Department of Health (DOH) to let you know whenever there is a newly positive test result for COVID-19 for either a staff member or resident in our facility. We are writing today to inform you that we have learned of positive test results for 14 of our residents and five staff members since yesterday. Any resident testing positive is moved to our isolation unit for a minimum of 14 days, and able to return to their regular unit after receiving a negative clinical test result. Staff members are required to quarantine at home for 14 days, returning to work only after receipt of a negative clinical test result.

Unfortunately, due to the increase of positive cases this week, Drive-Up Visits have temporarily been paused.

Please be assured you will be promptly notified by phone if your loved one is identified as a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, is on a quarantined unit, or has any other significant change in condition. You will find past Family and Resident Updates on our website at www.gurwin.org/family-updates/ should you need to access them.

Q & A
Each day, we will try to answer some frequently asked questions in this newsletter. If you have a question you would like to see answered that might help others as well as yourself, please email it to info@gurwin.org.

What is the reason for the uptick in positive cases among staff and residents?
COVID-19 is a disease that is not visible to the eye and we are not a 100% sterile bubble; it is difficult to answer how it is spreading. We are following all the protocols of the DOH and the CDC, which has been verified through eight deficiency-free infection control surveys. Despite the precautions, the virus can still come into our facility possibly through staff; on packages being brought in by families for delivery; from residents who leave for medically necessary appointments (this includes through their transportation, the building they go to, all the humans they interact with while they are out); from emergency vendors that must come in; and from food deliveries, to name a few. Added to the size of our staff and resident population being tested weekly, and statistically it is not
surprising that we will have positive cases. We continue to work closely with the DOH to contact trace, to try to avoid future outbreaks.

**Have the residents and staff who are testing positive been vaccinated?**

Of the residents and staff who tested positive since yesterday, about 25% have been fully vaccinated and almost all are asymptomatic and found through our weekly surveillance testing. According to Dr. Elliot Schwartz, our Medical Director, a person may still test positive after being vaccinated since the vaccine is not 100% effective. The two US-authorized vaccines are highly effective, but unfortunately they don't provide total protection. The Pfizer vaccine was 95% effective, and the Moderna vaccine was 94% effective, at preventing illness in clinical trials after people got two doses. **Vaccination prevents disease, but it's still unclear if, or how much, the vaccine prevents all infections.** The vaccines appear to be impacting the severity of disease, producing a less severe case if someone becomes infected with COVID-19 after vaccination as compared to someone who is not vaccinated. In addition, even after one is vaccinated, there is evidence showing that they can still transport the disease.

The DOH is working on a plan for vaccinating new admissions and staff once they arrive in our facility. Should a staff member or resident want the vaccine, they must be vaccinated outside of Gurwin at this time.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and understanding.

Sincerely,

The Gurwin Care Team

**Video Chat** with your loved one: email videochat@gurwin.org to request a time. (Limit one per family per week, please.)

Send your loved one a Gurwin Gram Gram. Send a short video to us via Facebook Messenger or by email to info@gurwin.org, and we'll deliver your good wishes.


Gurwin Healthcare System

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