

May 6, 2020

To all of our staff:

It is hard to believe that almost 2 months have passed since we met on March 13 to discuss the COVID 19 pandemic. It really does seem like we are living in a new world since then. This pandemic has changed how we do things at work, home and our communities. We want to thank each and every one of our employees for simply being our employees. Thank you for continuing to come to work during these trying times. Thank you for continuing to make good choices to keep you and your families safe and healthy, by doing so, you are keeping OUR CITIZENS family safe and healthy. Thank you for all that you do.

At Citizens we continue with weekly webinars with the Maryland Health Department, we maintain communication with MEMA (Maryland Emergency Management Agency) and we are updated regularly by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control). All of this information is reviewed in a COVID committee meeting that we have here at the facility daily. And with each meeting we may implement new requirements and recommendations made at both the Federal and State level. Some of these recommendations we started early on and continue and some we have implemented more recently as we learn more. Thank you for your patience as it seems we make changes daily. Please continue to be aware of the following...

- Please stay home when not feeling well. You should not return to work until you are 24 hours free of a fever (above 100F) without any medications. If you have any questions please ask your medical provider or call BJ here at the facility. We want what's best for you.
- The basics have not changed. Cough etiquette, hand hygiene and not touching your face remain important. Wash your hands, wash your hands, and wash your hands.
- Social Distancing. Residents should remain in their rooms the majority of the day. If they are needing to be outside of the room for safety or mental reasons they should always be six feet from others.
- When we are sitting at the nurses station, in a meeting or doing our work with others we should too be maintaining social distancing, except when providing care.
- We continue daily screening of residents, although this now requires us to do a visual assessment being documented by our nurses of every resident every day that has to be reviewed by a RN.
- Staff screening will continue. Starting today we are using a new tool that includes updated symptoms. Symptoms can now include dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, headache, GI symptoms, chills, shaking with chills, sore throat or muscle pain.
- This tool will also ask you who else or where else you may have had potential contact. You should include if a family member is positive or suspected, if you have visited a location where there has been COVID, such as a hospital or another work site. All of this information is needed and can be lifesaving. We will review your responses and are committed to supporting and safeguarding **YOU** and our **CITIZENS** family.

- ONE case of COVID, staff or resident, is considered an outbreak and must be reported to the State entities.
- We have had one part time employee test positive. They had not been in the building for 13 days when her test came back. This has been reported. We have not had any further positive cases with staff or residents.
- You may have heard that Governor Hogan has signed a directive that all staff and residents will be tested. We have learned that some people do not have symptoms even though they may have been exposed to COVID. They are called asymptomatic carriers. Anyone of us could be an asymptomatic carrier. By testing everyone we will be able to exclude them from work and decrease the chance of continued transmission / spread. We have not received directions for our testing yet. When we hear from the state we will communicate that to all of you.
- Because we all run the risk of being an asymptomatic carrier it is very important that we continue to pay attention to where we go, who we are around, where they have been and always washing our hands, multiple times a day. Please continue to limit your travel. Our residents are the most vulnerable population and we have committed to safe guard them when we choose to work at Citizens.
- We have learned that the less interactions we have with this vulnerable population the better. We have decreased the number of medical providers entering the building and the number of times a resident leaves the building, many times doing telehealth calls. We have decreased or eliminated some contract staff. Medications and treatments are being reviewed for possible discontinuation when appropriate, to preserve staff time and resident interaction (example nebulizer treatments, sliding scale insulin or vitamins). Looking at medication times and trying to decrease the number of times we enter a resident's room is beneficial as well. The goal is to try and bundle as much care as we can during each one of our visits into the residents room. This creates a safer environment.
- With that being said our residents are struggling with not seeing their friends, family and all of us outside of their room. We should all stock pile our compassion. We are all under stress. Take the time to spend a couple minutes even if in the door way, call social work or activities and coordinate a virtual visit with family and friends. Anything we can do to create a better environment for them during this time is appreciated. We are all struggling to understand when this will end.
- Lastly PPE. Personal Protective equipment. We are providing you with PPE to keep you and our residents healthy. All of this equipment is being allocated to healthcare. Many times the buildings that are struggling with COVID are receiving it. Being COVID free results in this negative impact for us that we are slowly seeing PPE delivered and when we do it is in low numbers. Please take good care of your equipment, clean it as needed and we will exchange it when visible soiled or broken. Thank you for taking good care of it and ensuring it lasts. The goal is to use PPE appropriately so we have it on hand every day.

Lastly, **You**. We are all experiencing this **together**. The stress can be hard to escape. We are living this pandemic here and at home. This experience connects us as caregivers. Every one of us that work here is making a difference and we are doing it together. We need to remember to celebrate each other during this time. Thank you for choosing Citizens and weathering this storm with us.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO! FROM THE ENTIRE MANAGEMENT TEAM