



July 24, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Dear Residents, Tenants, Family and Friends of St. John's,

### **Outdoor Visits**

To schedule an outdoor visit at the Highway 13 site or the Fountain Lake site, please call the receptionist at 507-373-8226.

Outdoor visits are from 9:30am to 7:30pm. Please do not schedule visits during meal times from 11:30am to 12:30pm and from 4:30pm to 5:30pm.

At the Fountain Lake site, we have moved the outdoor visiting area from the back of the nursing home to the front of the nursing home due to complaints regarding the odor from the dumpster.

At the Highway 13 site we have moved the visiting area to the gazebo and under the drive through awning at the chapel entrance.

Thank you to all visitors that have been following the basic precautions for outdoor visits: wearing a mask, social distancing of at least 6 feet, etc. These precautions were established by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to protect the residents, tenants, and visitors from the COVID-19 virus.

### **Essential Caregiver Visits**

St. John's Pandemic Committee has completed the policies and procedures for Essential Caregiver Visits. I will post the policy and procedures on Monday, July 27 on our website. I'm not posting this information today (Friday), because I'm anticipating that there may be questions. We received a lot of calls and questions when the MDH issued a press release regarding outdoor visits on a Friday afternoon. We had no heads up on the MDH requirements for outdoor visits. Staff that took calls over the weekend weren't able to answer questions, and this was frustrating for everyone: residents, tenants, families, and staff.

After you've reviewed the policies and procedures regarding Essential Caregiver visits, if you have questions, please call one of the following people:

Scot Spates, Administrator, 507-473-1011

Brandy Boettcher, Assistant Administrator, 507-473-1047

Michelle Jordan, Director of Nursing Highway 13 site, 507-473-1029

Chastity Peterson, Director of Nursing The Woodlands, 507-473-2265

Elaine Wieser, The Meadows Manager, 507-473-2293

Judy Duquette, Social Services, 507-473-2266

Krystal Lunning, Infection Control Nurse and Staff Development, 507-473-2513

I will highlight a few of the major considerations related to the Essential Caregiver.

### **One person designated as the Essential Caregiver**

Only one person should be designated as an Essential Caregiver by the resident or tenant. Every person that enters one of St. John's buildings could be a potential carrier of a virus. Having multiple Essential Caregivers per resident or tenant increases the total number of people in the building which in turn provides more opportunities for the virus to get into the building and infect residents, tenants, and staff.

### **Essential Caregivers need to understand and agree to take basic precautions**

Essential Caregivers must follow basic practices recommended by the CDC and the MDH to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Basic practices that must be followed include:

- Wearing a mask at all times during the visit
- Wearing protective eyewear
- Washing hands or using hand sanitizer prior to, during, and after the visit
- Social Distancing from others including other residents, tenants, and staff.

### **Must complete training prior to visits**

All Essential Caregivers are required to go through training prior to starting the essential visits. The training is important so that everyone is on the same page regarding precautions, visiting guidelines, etc.

### **Clarification on whole house testing**

A family member of a tenant asked for clarification regarding whole house COVID-19 testing. We have completed COVID-19 testing at the Highway 13 and the Fountain Lake locations. What this means is that everyone that resides or works in the nursing home or assisted living setting had the opportunity to be tested on site. Most the residents and tenants chose to be tested, but not all. We did have some residents that did not want to be tested, and we honored their choice to refuse medical treatment or care. Some families did not want their loved one tested, and we honored their decision on behalf of the resident as well.

We also had staff that chose not to be tested. Per the MDH, we were not to coerce or cajole staff, residents, or tenants to be tested.

Testing was not offered to people that reside in an independent living setting such as Knutson Place or Waters Edge. We would have liked to offer testing to people that reside in independent living, but this was not an option. The State of Minnesota specified that the onsite testing is for people in the nursing home and assisted living settings. People that reside in an independent living setting must go through their provider, or call the local COVID line to be tested.

I'll close with a reminder that the State of Minnesota is requiring masks in all indoor public spaces effective Saturday, July 25. From everything I've read, seen or heard about this virus, I think this will help to slow the spread of this virus. Anything that we can do to slow the spread will help to protect those that are most vulnerable to this virus.

Take Care and God Bless,

Scot Spates