



June 30, 2020

Dear Residents, Patients, Family Members and Students of Notre Dame Health Care,

Thank you for your continued patience and the role you are all playing to help keep our staff, residents, patients and their families safe and healthy. I am well aware of how trying these past several months have been for everyone. In an effort to keep those we serve as well informed as possible, we have tried hard to stay in regular communication, both at an organizational level and on a specific service-line level.

I encourage you to visit our website for the most current updates and memos. We are utilizing our COVID-19 update webpage <https://tinyurl.com/NDHCCOVID19Updates> as a place for you to find the latest and most relevant information. We post there frequently in order to help share information quickly and efficiently.

As an organization with multiple service lines, we must follow all mandated protocols that regulate our work. You may not be aware that these mandates are **different** for each of our programs. As we've shared previously, we have worked very hard to follow all directives of the CDC, CMS, DPH and EOEA on COVID-19 prevention and containment measures. Our goal is always to follow the very best practices to ensure the health and well-being of all we serve.

As we learn about the rules of the "Reopening of Massachusetts" throughout the Commonwealth, please know that our programs and facilities remain restricted from permitting many of the things you are now able to enjoy in your neighborhoods and communities. This can be confusing as you are now allowed to go to restaurants or hairdressers, yet we are still not allowed to have visitors (with few exceptions) within our buildings; this actually still includes prohibiting hairdressers to enter to serve our residents.

The following updates related to our ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic may be of interest:

Employee Screening, Testing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- All employees are screened for COVID-19 symptoms when reporting for work (at our long term care center they are also re-screened upon reentry to the building during the same work shift);
- All employees in all service lines have participated in baseline testing for COVID-19 and our staff is re-tested if symptoms warrant; our long term care center employees have been required to participate in a second round of facility employee testing as a part of our mitigation protocols. As always, all staff who exhibit symptoms will continue to be referred for medical attention through their primary care physician;
- All employees are required to wear a medical grade mask at all times, and the use of other PPE per infection control protocols is required on an as needed basis;
- We have secured appropriate supplies of PPE to further reduce the spread of the virus as well as to protect our workers and our residents.

Resident Testing

We completed baseline testing for all residents at our long term care center and assisted living community several weeks ago, and continue to test as symptoms warrant. Residents are separated/cohorted or quarantined as appropriate and in accordance with mandated protocols to help mitigate transmission and spread.

Visitation on Campus

- We have restricted visitors into our buildings (with few exceptions) in accordance with all directives;
- In June, we implemented limited outdoor visitation (by appointment) at our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center as well as at du Lac Assisted Living Residence (information on this guidance can be found on our COVID-19 Update webpage);

Program/Service Updates:

Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center

- As of this writing we have had a cumulative total of 64 residents who tested positive for COVID-19; sadly, 32 residents succumbed to the virus (or COVID-like symptoms) and we continue to mourn their passing. Two residents have been discharged, and of the remaining 40 residents residing at our long term care center who have tested positive, all have recovered and there are currently no residents in the facility who are still considered positive;
- Outdoor visitation (by appointment) is underway;
- Technology (ipads, cell phones, etc.) is available to assist residents and family with “virtual visits”;
- We hope to resume admissions from the community in the near future; we have restricted admissions to the facility during the pandemic outbreak as a part of our mitigation efforts;
- Staff continues to provide personalized care and socialization to keep resident spirits up in these trying times.

du Lac Assisted Living Residence

- As of this writing we have had a cumulative total of 31 residents who tested positive for COVID-19; sadly, 9 residents succumbed to the virus and we continue to mourn their passing. Of the remaining 22 residents who tested positive, all have recovered and there are currently no residents in the facility who are still considered positive;
- Outdoor visitation (by appointment) is underway;
- Technology (ipads, cell phones, etc.) is available to assist residents and family with “virtual visits”;
- Small group activities with proper social distancing of residents are now permitted;
- Admission to the assisted living facility remains limited by regulating authorities to allow only for very specific exceptions in which an elder faces increased risk of harm if access is not provided.

At Home—Hospice and Palliative Care Programs

- Our team in our “At Home” division has been providing hospice and palliative care services on our campus as well as in the community. For some of our patients, care teams have been able to provide in-person services, depending on specific circumstances; most services have been provided via “telehealth” and personal calls with patients and families;

- As of this writing, staff have served a cumulative total of 28 patients who tested positive for COVID-19;
- Staff in our “At Home” division has been providing extra support to du Lac and Long Term Care during the pandemic.

Educational Bridge Center

- The Center has been closed to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Staff has been reaching out to students and keeping in touch throughout the closure;
- Staff has been planning and exploring service options for the near and mid-term as other programs in the larger community re-open;
- Staff has been providing extra support across all service lines on our campus during the pandemic.

If you have additional questions or concerns, the Executive Directors of our service line programs are happy to speak with you. Please feel free to call our assisted living residence (Jessica Morreale 508-852-5800, X2104), long term and rehabilitation center (Emmanuel Ikomi 508-852-3011, X3110), our hospice and palliative care programs (Susan Keefe 508-852-5505); or our Educational Bridge Center (Pat Campbell 508-852-5800, X2503).

Our staff will continue to put their heart and soul into serving our residents, patients and families. And, we remain deeply grateful for your extraordinary patience during this unprecedented time, which we know has been hard on everyone. And while there are ever changing regulations which govern our ability to open our doors wide and welcome the world back in, we are as eager as you are to get back to some sort of normal when the time is right and it is safe to do so.

I know you understand that our highest priority is the health and well-being of those in our care.

For more information on the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the CDC’s coronavirus information page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>. Information on Notre Dame Health Care’s policies and procedures can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/NDHCCOVID19Updates>. We are updating our website regularly with helpful information and encourage you to visit this page often.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a cherished member of our community.

With gratitude,



Karen M. Laganelli, M.H.A.
Chief Executive Officer