



January 22, 2021

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.

By all counts and comparisons, 2020 was an extraordinarily challenging year. For everyone.

The impact of COVID-19 at Notre Dame Health Care has been intense, from the financial to the emotional, it has been hard. But we power on. Given the ongoing surge of the pandemic across the nation, we know there will still be difficult times ahead. We are resilient, as prepared as we can be, and unwavering in our commitment to our mission to provide compassionate care and service to our residents, patients, families and students.

I am well aware of how trying the past ten months have been for everyone. In an effort to keep those we serve as well informed as possible, we have tried very 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. And, if any situation arises relative to your loved one in our care, we will certainly reach out directly very promptly.

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 EOEPA 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.

To strengthen our efforts to keep our residents safe and the virus out of our buildings, we continue to go "above and beyond" mandated requirements with our COVID-19 testing schedules and use of PPE in all of our operating divisions, for both residents and employees. We are also working with CVS Pharmacy as a part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program in offering COVID-19 vaccines to all of our residents and staff.

Our tremendous efforts around infection control and our adherence to the ever-changing guidance from all of our regulatory authorities have proven to be effective. We are constantly reinforcing proper infection control protocols with our employees and our residents. We believe these efforts have helped us as the pandemic continues to surge around us. We also know that despite best efforts, we are not immune to the many concerns around community spread, and we

continue to work diligently every day to prevent the virus from spreading through our “home” here at Notre Dame Health Care.

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

#### Employee Screening, Testing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and Vaccinations

- We have adopted a flu vaccine mandate for all of our employees (with allowed exceptions).
- We are working with CVS Pharmacy in offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all employees who wish to receive it;
- All employees, in every service line, are screened for COVID-19 symptoms when reporting for work;
- All employees, in every service line, have participated in baseline testing for COVID-19 and we have implemented ongoing surveillance testing of all of our staff. The testing schedule is intensive and beyond the mandates imposed on us by regulatory authorities;
- 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 face 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 inventories of PPE supplies to further reduce the spread of the virus as well as to protect our workers, our residents, and family visitors;

#### Resident Screening, Testing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and Vaccinations

- As with our employees, we are working with CVS Pharmacy in offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all residents who wish to receive it;
- Residents are screened regularly for symptoms as mandated **and** as needed if symptoms arise;
- We completed baseline testing for all residents at our long term care center and assisted living community some time ago, and continue to test as symptoms and exposure warrant or as mandates require;
- Residents are provided with appropriate PPE (such as masks, etc.) as needed or required;
- 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; the “rules” around visitation change rapidly and are dictated by a number of factors that are beyond our control (including mandates by our regulating authorities). Our facility administrators strive to keep you informed of these changes and you will find current updates for both our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center and du Lac Assisted Living Residence on our COVID-19 Update webpage.
- In all cases, visitation when permitted is by appointment and in accordance with all appropriate protocols to ensure the health and well-being of you and your loved-one;
- Additionally, we continue to discourage residents from leaving our facilities in an effort to keep them safe as the virus surges in the greater community.

### 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 and volunteers have adapted and are conducting a number of programs “virtually” during the closure;
- Staff continues to plan service options for ongoing program delivery, including additional “virtual” learning opportunities.

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 or Sue Strandberg 508-852-5800, X2503/X2504).

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.

Through all of the challenges this year, we remain committed to providing our mission-centric programs and services in a safe and responsible manner. We are grateful for your faith in our work and for staying strong *with* us as we move together toward a brighter tomorrow. We know it will come.....not as fast as any of us would like, but it will.

Thank you for your continued support. May God’s love and care be upon you always and in this new year.

With gratitude,



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