



October 1, 2021

Dear Residents and Family Members,

September 26th marked a significant milestone for ERS. It is the date that we required all staff in our retirement communities and support office to have had their first shot of the vaccine or apply for an exemption. We were the first retirement community in our area to announce a mandate and have the earliest mandate. Other organizations have even changed their dates based on staffing or acceptance rate among employees. We prioritize our staff and residents' health and safety among our highest values. As of Sunday, all the staff working in our retirement communities serving the most vulnerable have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Unfortunately, because we understand that being fully vaccinated takes 14 days after the last dose, we will not be able to tout being fully vaccinated until late October / early November.

You may ask, then, why I continue to report positive cases. We continue to have positive cases primarily for two reasons: a person in the process of getting shots and is not fully vaccinated or is a fully vaccinated person who has had a breakthrough case. We shouldn't be surprised by this since cases of healthcare workers contracting COVID-19 is directly related to the occurrence rate of the surrounding county, not what we are doing or not doing in our communities. However, the wonderful news is that if a person is in the vaccination process or has a breakthrough case, we have seen that they have had very mild symptoms and have not required treatment other than resting at home. Additionally, research has suggested that vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infections tend to spread the virus for a shorter time.

Others have asked about the staffing implications of our mandate. We have had very few staff members leave because of the vaccine mandate. Many staff members took their first shot in September. For this, we are very appreciative. Others have decided to retire or work in a non-healthcare setting. Open positions are always challenging, but with our current labor market, it is incredibly challenging. Our management team anticipated openings and has been proactive. We have put a few things in place: increasing our referral bonuses, incentivizing our current staff to pick up shifts, and expediting the hiring and onboarding process for new employees. We are also holding weekly job fairs throughout October. ERS is a top workplace for 12 years running, and staff enjoy working with our organization. All these strategies help us attract top talent. However, we can't blame COVID for all our challenges. For example, we have one dining service team that lost very few staff to the mandate, but still has several openings because of the labor market which has caused us to close some dining rooms within one of our communities temporarily. Additionally, our managers are being intentional about not just hiring any candidate to fill a position but finding a great cultural fit to care for our residents.

We have three positive COVID-19 cases to report. A direct caregiver who worked in our Assisted Living Memory Support households (Kirby, Luther, and Morris) has tested positive for COVID-19 and is quarantining at home. The second is a non-direct caregiver who works has tested positive and is also quarantining at home. Lastly, a private duty worker with one resident living in our

residential area tested positive and is quarantining at home. Residents in our nursing areas and Assisted Living Memory Support have been tested, and all are negative at this time. Due to continued COVID-19 activity and in accordance with federal regulations, visitation remains paused in our Shaw building (Romney, Berghamer, Amstein, and Shaw Rehab Households). A resident from our Elberon Affordable Living Community has tested positive for COVID-19 and is quarantining at home.

We also received some very sad news this week. A family member at Deupree House / Cottages shared that a private duty that had COVID-19 several months ago has passed away. They shared that the person was unvaccinated.

The following is the cumulative reporting for our CCRCs since March 2020:

COVID-19 Reporting	Episcopal Church Home	Deupree House & Cottages	Marjorie Lee
Residents			
Current residents with confirmed COVID- 19	0	0	0
Cumulative residents with confirmed COVID-19	43	5	24
Staff*			
Current staff with confirmed COVID- 19	0	0	2
Cumulative staff with confirmed COVID- 19	59	25	77
3 or more residents or staff with new-onset COVID-19 respiratory symptoms in a 72-hour period.			
Current occurrences	0	0	0
Cumulative occurrences	10	5	21

*Private duty and contracted staff are reported to our residents and families, however, are not included in the cumulative chart above based on reporting guidelines by the city and state.

Please let me know if you have suggestions and questions.

Sincerely,



Laura Lamb, President & CEO