



Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,

This newsletter is being sent to all responsible parties listed as the primary contact for the Baldwin Care Center. Birch Haven Assisted Living is sending this newsletter to responsible parties. The Apartment Manager distributes copies to the Birchwood Apartment tenants. Responsible parties can direct their family members to the Baldwin Care Center website at [www.baldwincarecenter.com](http://www.baldwincarecenter.com) to read current and previous newsletters. If there is a topic you would like discussed in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me via email at [elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com](mailto:elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com) or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



Since the publication of the last newsletter we have had a pretty significant increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases amongst staff. If you listen to the news, you are aware that the Omicron variant is the most prevalent currently. The Omicron variant is very easily transmitted. The Baldwin Care Center has had five staff test positive. Three were Office/Administrative staff who did not have exposure to Baldwin Care Center residents. One was a dietary employee who did not expose residents. There was a nursing assistant who did test positive. She did work in the Whispering Pines Neighborhood. After this employee tested positive, we rapid tested all residents. All of the resident's test results were negative. We then collected samples to be sent to a laboratory. These test results were all negative also. Birch Haven had five staff test positive during the last two week period. All staff were caregivers. All residents were rapid tested. One resident was found to be positive during the rapid testing. PCR tests were collected for staff and residents. No additional residents were positive. We continue to send PCR tests to the lab until we have no positive test results for two weeks. Both Birch Haven and Baldwin Care Center are currently conducting this testing. In the last newsletter I discussed the new guidance regarding return to work for health care workers. Since this guidance has become effective, the Baldwin Care Center campus has been looking at each positive employee test on a case-by-case basis to determine when they may return to work. Many of the staff who tested positive were asymptomatic or were only mildly symptomatic. Those staff were allowed to return earlier than the conventional method used previously, which was 10 days. If employees remain more than mildly symptomatic they cannot return to work. Employees who do return to work earlier than 10 days are rapid testing upon their return as an added precaution. Those employees are also wearing a higher level of source control. They are wearing either a KN95 or an N95 mask for additional protection of residents and other staff. Just as a reminder, positive cases of COVID-19 in any of the settings do not impact visitation. Visitors who have been exposed to COVID-19 or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not be visiting. Federal, State and County Public Health guidance currently indicates that visitors SHOULD NOT be removing their masks during visits. It is not uncommon for people who have the Omicron variant to be asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic. I am sure that visitors do not want to put their loved ones at risk for contracting COVID-19.



On January 13<sup>th</sup> the United States Supreme Court stopped the vaccine-or-test mandate issued by OSHA for employers with 100 or more employees. The Court ruled that OSHA had to stop enforcing the "Emergency Temporary Standard" (ETS) that contained the vaccine-or-test mandate. The Court concluded that OSHA had exceeded its authority when it enacted the ETS. According to the Court, OSHA is responsible for setting workplace safety standards, not broad public policy measures. In a separate decision, the U.S. Supreme Court permitted the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to begin enforcing nationwide, its healthcare worker vaccine mandate, which applies to health care facilities that receive Medicare and Medicaid funding. At the time of the Supreme Court ruling, the decision impacted twenty six states that had not filed suit regarding the vaccine mandate. Wisconsin was not one of the states that filed suit, so the vaccine mandate went into effect for these states. Facilities must have policies and procedures in place regarding the vaccine mandate by January 28<sup>th</sup>. By this date facilities must have all employees vaccinated (first dose) or employees must have a qualifying exemption in place by January 28<sup>th</sup>. Staff must be fully vaccinated by February 28<sup>th</sup>. After the Supreme Court made their decision regarding the vaccine mandate, CMS issued guidance for the health care workers in the two dozen states that had filed suit regarding the vaccine mandate. The new guidance meant that healthcare workers in those 24 states must receive at least one dose of the vaccine within 30 days and must be fully vaccinated by March 15. All of this new guidance and changes in deadlines makes things somewhat confusing and hard to keep track of. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me. The Baldwin Care

Center is currently compliant with the requirements that will be effective January 28<sup>th</sup>. All employees are either vaccinated or have had a qualifying exemption approved.



Thank you to Dan and Tricia Van Brunt from the New Centerville Methodist Church for donating puzzles for all of the residents of the campus. Thank you to Mary Frey for sewing clothing protectors for the residents of the Baldwin Care Center.

*Eileen LaFavor,  
Administrator*



**Corrine Young**

**Iris Nadeau**



**Richard Meyer**

