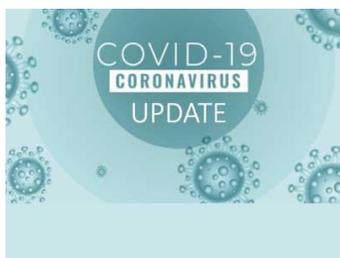


Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,



This newsletter is being sent to all responsible parties listed as the primary contact for the Baldwin Care Center. Birch Haven 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 to read current and previous newsletters. If there is a topic that you would like discussed in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me via email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



In the last newsletter I discussed the vaccine mandate for health care workers in long term care and other Medicare/Medicaid providers that was published on November 4th and required health care workers to receive their first COVID-19 vaccine by December 5th. Recently a federal judge has granted a preliminary injunction that halts the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) rule requiring vaccination for health care workers. In the ruling that was issued by the judge the indication was that CMS had exceeded its authority in issuing the rule and did not have good cause to forego the required notice and comment period. Normally, a comment period occurs before a rule is issued by CMS. At this time, employees of Medicare and Medicaid health care providers are not required to follow the vaccine mandate rule. There is no indication as to when this issue will be resolved. It looks as though a decision by a higher court will have to be issued. I will keep everyone posted as to what is transpiring. The facility

When staff or residents test positive for COVID-19 the facility is required to notify residents and families about the positive case. Throughout the pandemic, we have been making phone calls to family members to inform them of the positive cases. We are looking at a more effective and efficient way to do that. I am wondering if family members would be willing to share their email addresses, so that notifications could be sent in that way. If you could send your email contacts to my email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com that would be great. I am hopeful everyone has an email address. We may be calling to request email addresses. If you do not have an email address, we will continue to contact you by phone.

Since the publication of the last newsletter the campus has had some additional COVID-19 cases. There were two tenants in the Birchwood Apartments who tested positive. Two staff in Birch Haven Assisted Living tested positive also. Two part-time Baldwin Care Center staff who do not have direct patient contact tested positive. The staff with COVID-19 are required to be off work for 10 days after they test positive. It was not only unvaccinated people who tested positive. Some of the recent cases had received vaccinations. The community transmission rate in the county and across the entire state is in the High category for the most recent two week period. The number of COVID patients in hospitals remains high. Hospital beds are simply not available in either rural or metro locations. Patients sent to area hospitals may need to be transferred to other hospitals as far away as South Dakota. The bed availability situation in nursing facilities remains difficult. Nursing facilities are unable to admit residents because of staffing levels. Their inability to provide services to residents exacerbates the bed availability situation in the hospital. Hospitals cannot find a bed in a skilled nursing facility to discharge patients to. Recently we have received referrals from hospitals in LaCrosse, WI, Rochester, MN and Fargo, North Dakota. The staffing crisis in nursing facilities is causing a further strain on the shortage of hospital beds that are tight because of the increase in COVID-19 cases. There are no immediate and easy answers to these problems. The labor shortage is not improving and the number of COVID cases remains high. Relief for nursing facilities and hospitals does not seem to be attainable in the near future.



I hope that all of you took a moment on Tuesday, December 7th to remember the 2,403 Americans who were killed in the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941. This year marked the 80th anniversary of the beginning of World War II. In 1994, The U.S. Congress designated December 7th of each year as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Please remember not only those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor, but also those who served in WWII. The members of the "Greatest Generation" who served in WWII are passing away at a rate of 250 per day. We recognize the sacrifices they made to protect our country.



Our Circle of Love Lighting Ceremony will be held on Monday, December 13th at 6:00 p.m. in the front parking lot of the Baldwin Care Center. Large gatherings indoors are still not allowed, so we are holding the event outdoors. Please dress accordingly. Hot cider and cookies will be served. Animals from the Fantasy Corral will be visiting as they did last year. Pastor Hanson will be here to provide some seasonal music. The list of donors to the Circle of Love will be read and acknowledged. Thank you to everyone who has contributed in memory or in honor of a loved one. It is greatly appreciated.



Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator

It's beginning
to look
a lot like
Christmas!



Thank you

Peace Lutheran Carolers!



Dressed in "plaid-aday" style

