



Dear Residents, Family Members and Friend:

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 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 or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) revised guidance for long-term care facilities regarding visitation and testing requirements effective 3-10-22. I will attempt to highlight the changes for both. The testing requirement changes include:

- Replacement of the term “vaccinated” with “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses” and deleted the term “unvaccinated”. Up-to-date means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including booster doses when eligible.
- Routine testing of staff who are not up-to-date, should be based on the level of community transmission reported in the past week. Staff who are up-to-date do not need to be routinely tested.
- Testing is not necessary for asymptomatic people who have recovered from a COVID-19 infection within the prior 90 days. If testing is performed, an antigen test should be used.

The visitation requirement changes include:

- Replacement of the term “vaccinated” with “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses” and deleted the term “unvaccinated”.
- Visitors who have had a positive test for COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine (because of an exposure), should not enter the facility.
- Visitors should wear face coverings or masks and physically distance when around residents or healthcare personnel, regardless of vaccination status.
- Residents, regardless of vaccination status, can choose not to wear face coverings or masks when other residents are not present and can have close contact (including touch) with their visitor. Residents (or their representative) and their visitors who are not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, should be advised of the risks of physical contact prior to visiting.

What does all of this mean? This means the facility has to expand testing for those individuals who are not “up-to-date”. Staff who were fully vaccinated in the past do not necessarily meet the criteria for up-to-date now. The staff who have not had their booster shot are not considered up-to-date and will have to begin testing based on the community transmission rate. Recently, St. Croix County has moved from a low level of community transmission to a substantial level. The minimum testing frequency of staff in a county with this level of transmission is two times per week. This is the frequency that we had been testing unvaccinated staff at. So, for the time being we will test unvaccinated staff and those staff who have not had a booster dose, twice weekly. Testing for staff will decrease if the county is in a low or moderate community transmission level. Honestly, not much has changed with the visitation guidance other than the replacement of the term “vaccinated” with “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses”. Please let me know if you have questions about any of the revisions to the guidance regarding testing or visitation.

Since the publication of the last newsletter we have not had any cases of COVID-19 for residents or staff across the campus. We have however, had some residents and staff in Birch Haven Assisted Living and Baldwin Care Center experiencing a gastrointestinal illness. Notices for visitors have been placed on the doors of the affected facilities. This does not prohibit you from visiting. This allows you to make a choice as to whether you want to visit. If you have specific questions regarding this, please let staff at the facility know.



Thank you to Dixie Helder for treating the Baldwin Care Center staff to cookies. A big thank you to Scott Mathison from Arneson Insurance Agency for bringing donuts from the Spring Valley Bakery for the staff.

It has definitely been a welcome sight to see some sunshine and warmer temperatures. We are looking forward to Spring!

*Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator*

