

Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,



This weekly newsletter is being sent to responsible parties listed as the primary contact for residents of the Baldwin Care Center. We ask that responsible parties either share information with other siblings, etc. or direct family and friends to the Baldwin Care Center website at www.baldwincarecenter.com where each weekly newsletter is posted. This newsletter is sent electronically to the Birchwood Apartment Manager and the Birch Haven Assisted Living Manager to distribute as they see fit. If anyone has questions about anything that appears in the weekly newsletter, please feel free to contact me by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103 or via email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com. If you have ideas about anything else that you would like to see in the newsletter, please feel free to give me a call or contact me via email.

We will continue the discussion regarding testing of staff and residents of long-term care facilities. The guidance from the State of Wisconsin continues to have nursing facilities test employees every other week. The positivity rate in Wisconsin continues to be moderately high to high dependent upon which county you live in. According to the guidance received by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), staff in nursing facilities in these areas should be tested weekly. As I have indicated previously, testing kits remain unavailable for routine testing of nursing facility staff at this time. It appears the only way you can receive testing kits is if you have a current positive test. I will discuss this further later in the newsletter. The federal government continues to distribute the point-of-care tests to nursing facilities across the country. This facility has not received these tests, not do I have any idea when we will be receiving them. These are the rapid result tests. Last week I indicated that the State of Wisconsin had developed relationships with other laboratories that could do testing for nursing facilities. Nursing facilities will be assigned a lab that they will be working with. The state regulators from the Division of Quality Assurance will be contacting facilities in the near future to let them know which lab they have been assigned to work with. Then facilities will be working directly with those labs regarding testing. Facilities will be assigned to labs based on size, location and outbreak status. Facilities are being told that we should know more by the end of August.



During this past week there were no positive test results for staff, nor were there any residents in the Baldwin Care Center or Birch Haven Assisted Living with symptoms that needed to be tested. There was however, a Birchwood Apartment tenant that was considered a probable case based on the positive result from the rapid antigen test that was performed at the hospital before he was admitted to the hospital. The tenant did return to their apartment. As a result of the probable case, all the tenants in Birchwood

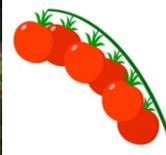
Apartments were quarantined to their apartments. This means that they were not to leave their apartments. Meals were delivered to their apartments. All activities ceased for the time being. Another test was performed on the tenant before they left the hospital. This was not a rapid test. This was a PCR molecular test with a higher degree of accuracy. The results from that test were negative. Even though that test result was negative, tenants were to remain in quarantine at this time. St. Croix County Public Health contacted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) for a recommendation. DHS indicated that the tenant should have a second negative PCR test before all tenants could be cleared from quarantine. We had a dedicated staff member caring for the probable case and separate caregivers providing services for all of the other tenants. I did contact the State of Wisconsin Emergency Management office to see if I could get testing kits for all of the tenants and staff of the Birchwood Apartments. Since we had an initial positive result for a tenant, I was able to procure testing kits for all of the tenants. I also requested tests for all staff on the campus. I wanted to make certain that we did not have any positive test results for any staff member on the campus. Testing for all tenants and Birchwood Apartment staff was conducted on Monday, August 17th. The tests were brought by courier to Exact Sciences Laboratory. We received the test results for all of the Birchwood Apartment tenants and staff who work there. The tests results were turned around quite rapidly and we received an indication that all tests

were negative. Because there were two negative PCR molecular tests for the probable case, the quarantine for the Birchwood Apartments was ended. The staff in Birch Haven Assisted Living were tested on Wednesday, August 19th and Baldwin Care Center staff were tested on Thursday, August 20th. I will report results as soon as we get them. Just as a reminder, if there are any positive test results, residents and responsible parties will be notified within 12 hours of the time we would receive the positive test result. If all of the tests are negative, I will report that in next week's newsletter.



One of the topics discussed at last week's webinar with the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) were surveys. Prior to COVID-19 each nursing facility in the state is surveyed by a team from the Department of Health Services, Division of Quality Assurance. This survey was held onsite at the facility with a team of 3-4 surveyors that stayed 3-4 days dependent upon the size of the facility. This annual survey is a very intensive review of the care provided to residents within the last year. With the restrictions caused by COVID-19, surveys by DHS have had to change. DHS continues to complete surveys, but they are primarily a Focused Infection Control Survey (FICS). Each facility in the state has had a FICS conducted. Facilities that have three suspected cases in a week or have a positive COVID resident may be subjected to another FICS. DHS is also currently conducting complaint surveys if needed. The FICS, for the most part, is conducted offsite electronically. There is a part of one day that involves a surveyor doing observation of infection control practices. The Baldwin Care Center had no deficiencies during their FICS. Last week CMS announced that it had levied more than \$15 million in fines to nursing homes since March, particularly for infection control requirements. In addition, federal regulators have tripled the number of Immediate Jeopardy citations, the most severe possible, during the same span. The CEOs of national associations that represent nursing facilities across the country are speaking out indicating fines are not the answer. We need help and collaboration from CMS, not punishment. Nursing facilities are already spending extraordinary amounts on personal protective equipment and other pandemic related expenses. A punitive approach that fines already financially burdened facilities is not sustainable. Studies have shown that COVID-19 spread in the greater surrounding community is a leading predictor of how much the virus will spread in the nursing home. A more collaborative approach is needed to address this national and global crisis. 40% of nursing homes surveyed indicate that they cannot sustain services if the same operating conditions persist for the next six months. Nursing facilities are doing the very best we can with the resources we have available. I remain hopeful, as I know the rest of you do, that a vaccine for this highly contagious and invisible virus be found soon.

*Eileen LaFavor
Administrator*



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