

Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,



This newsletter is sent to all responsible parties listed as the primary contact for residents at the Baldwin Care Center. The newsletter is distributed to the residents of the Baldwin Care Center also. Responsible parties can direct other family members to the Baldwin Care Center Campus website at www.baldwincarecenter.com and have them read the current and previous newsletters that are posted there. Birch Haven Assisted Living is sending the newsletter to responsible parties. The Birchwood Apartment Manager makes copies of the newsletter and distributes them to the tenants. If there is anything 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.



At the end of last week, on Thursday November 6th when we were completing testing for the residents and the staff, we found that three employees tested positive with the rapid antigen tests. Staff from Baldwin Care Center had contacted residents and family members regarding the positive cases. All three employees are direct care staff members. All of the employees indicated that they had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment when in contact with residents and other staff, so there is low risk of exposure. The results from the resident tests performed on Thursday, November 6th were all negative. The staff who tested positive initially all went to have a confirmatory molecular test done at a local health care provider. All tested positive with the molecular test also. These employees are off work for at least 10 days. All are recovering at home and doing well. The alarming thing for me during this testing was the number of positive employees. However, it should not be surprising given the incidence in the community. I am sure most of you are aware that Wisconsin continues to be a hotspot for COVID-19 cases. The positive aspect of the twice weekly testing is that we are catching the employees who are not showing symptoms. The other positive that can be taken away from this situation with positive employees is that we have not had any residents test positive. Hopefully this is also an indication that our staff are following proper infection control practices. The process of testing staff twice weekly and residents once per week during an outbreak remains a cumbersome one, but one that is clearly worth completing. Since the increase in the positivity rate in the state and in St. Croix County, it has been more difficult to get testing supplies. It does make some sense that this would be the case. With over 70% of counties increasing their need for testing, it seems logical that there would be delays in getting the molecular tests. We do continue to have supplies of the rapid antigen tests, but those are not as accurate as the molecular tests that are sent to the lab for processing. The date that residents may return to socially distanced dining and activities would be Friday, November 20th, unless we experience another positive case. I do want to pass along a special thank you to the Activity department staff that have done a great job during this time of quarantine, getting residents outside during the unseasonably warm weather we experienced in November.

Both the Birchwood Apartments and Birch Haven Assisted Living facilities received their rapid antigen tests. Both settings have begun testing staff. They are testing half of the staff one week and half the next week, so all staff will be tested twice monthly. This will give us a better idea as to whether we have any staff who are asymptomatic and are working. At this time this is not a requirement for assisted living facilities. It is something that we feel is important to do to protect the residents of Birchwood Apartments and Birch Haven Assisted Living.



I want to mention a problem that is occurring in hospitals in the state. If you listen to the news you are aware that there is a shortage of ICU beds and regular hospital beds. The COVID crisis has led to this problem. There are patients who need to be admitted from the hospital to the nursing facility. Because of the positive staff cases we are unable to take new admissions unless we have not had a positive test for 14 days. All of the facilities in the area are in this situation at the moment that we are unable to admit. This creates an access problem. The hospital does not have the room to keep patients and nursing facilities cannot take them. This week we have been working on a plan to create a separate unit so we could possibly admit new

residents that need care. We recently have had to decline admissions because of the quarantine related to the positive staff cases. The plan to create a separate unit involves using a specific section of the nursing facility that would be separated by floor to ceiling barriers that would have separate door openings. This would keep the area separate from the quarantined area. At this time we are looking at creating a four bed separate unit. This unit could also be transitioned to a COVID-19 unit if the need arises. I am hopeful that the need will never arise. This unit would have dedicated staff that would just work in that unit. The creation of this separate unit may create a necessity for a resident to move from the room that they are currently in. Staff will get permission from both the resident and the family before a move would be made.

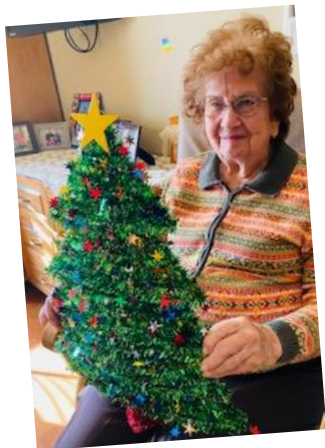
I do want to mention that the visitation policy remains the same as it has been for the past several weeks. Due to the increased positivity rate in St. Croix County, visitation in all settings remains on hold. The only type of visits that are allowed are compassionate care visits. This normally involves end-of-life situations, but may apply in other special circumstances. I encourage all of you to try to do your part in decreasing the incidence of COVID-19 in the community. I am seeing more and more people who are not paying attention to the mask mandate. It is so important in protecting yourselves and others. If the positivity rate in the county decreases to under 10%, we will be able to begin scheduling indoor visitation.



This week we would like to thank Richard Range for treating the staff at the Baldwin Care Center to pizza. We decided to expand the pizza party so that all staff on the campus were treated to pizza that day. The staff was very appreciative. They have been working very hard during these difficult times. I am very blessed to work with an incredibly dedicated and committed staff on this campus.

Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator

Getting Ready for the Holidays



CAN YOU HELP
us spread some holiday cheer?

Do you have any holiday lights, yard or outdoor decorations that are collecting dust or that you won't be using this year?

If so, we have the perfect place for them! We are taking our annual holiday decor to our Chamber member, the **Baldwin Care Center & decorating outside for the residents!** We would like to have lights around the parameter of the building for them to enjoy as they are in their rooms. We are hoping to bring them some holiday cheer after a long COVID spring, summer & fall!

There's a lot of area to cover, more than we are able to do on our own and we are hoping that you will be able to help us make it festive during such a challenging time for them.

If you have any outdoor lights, lighted yard decorations, blow up santas/snowmen/reindeer, figurines, candy canes, ribbons, etc. [we would be grateful for anything] that we can borrow, or you would like to volunteer your time to help decorate, please message us here or email Sarah at bwchamber@baldwin-telecom.net.

We will be decorating Thursday, November 19th in the afternoon and ask that any donations be received by Tuesday, November 17th so we can come up with a final plan.

Thank you!

