



Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,

This newsletter is being sent to responsible parties listed as the primary contact for the residents of the Baldwin Care Center. This newsletter is being distributed to the residents of the Baldwin Care Center. Birch Haven Assisted Living is also sending newsletters to responsible parties. The Apartment Manager distributes copies to the Birchwood Apartment tenants. Responsible parties can direct other family members and friends 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 contact me via email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



On February 16th, the Centers for Disease Control released updates to two previous memos. One is titled "Return to Work Criteria for Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection". Updates to the guidance indicated that Health Care Personnel (HCP) who are severely immune compromised could remain infectious for more than 20 days after symptom onset. In these cases consultation with infectious disease specialists is recommended. The use of a test based strategy for determining when these HCP may return to work could be considered. This is really not an issue that the Baldwin Care Center has encountered. The other guidance that was updated by the CDC is titled "Strategies to Mitigate Health Care Personnel Staffing Shortages". The key point of the updated guidance is that maintaining appropriate staffing in healthcare facilities is essential to providing a safe work environment for HCP and safe patient care. That is a very broad and generic statement regarding the current staffing situation. All healthcare facilities are aware that this is the case. The problem becomes maintaining appropriate staffing levels. The CDC's strategies to mitigate staffing shortages include: *Cancel all non-essential procedures and visits. *Attempt to address social factors that might prevent HCP from reporting to work, such as the need for transportation or housing that allows for social distancing *Identify additional HCP to work in the facility. Facilities should be aware of state-specific emergency waivers. *As appropriate, request that HCP postpone elective time off from work. However, there should be consideration for the mental health benefits of time off. *Develop regional plans to identify designated healthcare facilities or alternate care facilities with adequate staffing to care for residents with SARS-CoV-2 infection and implement the plan to transfer patients to these facilities. *Allow asymptomatic HCP who have had a higher-risk exposure to SARS-CoV-2, but are not known to be infected to shorten their duration of work restriction. *Allow asymptomatic HCP who are not fully vaccinated and have had an exposure to SARS-CoV-2, to continue to work onsite throughout their 14 day post exposure period. The Baldwin Care Center and other facilities have tried to utilize some of the strategies suggested. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation still is that there is a widespread shortage of health care personnel that none of us have found a solution to. This campus continues to need direct care staff to care for residents in both the Baldwin Care Center and Birch Haven Assisted Living. If you are aware of anyone who has a passion for caring for others, please send them our way.

The quarantine on the Whispering Pines Neighborhood in the Baldwin Care Center ends on Friday, February 26th. This was because of the positive employee from the 11th of February. There are currently no other COVID cases on the campus. Vestibule visits continue in Birchwood Apartments and Birch Haven Assisted Living. Please contact the Apartment Manager in Birchwood Apartments or one of the Nurse Managers in Birch Haven Assisted Living to schedule vestibule visits. I continue to schedule visiting booth visits for the Baldwin Care Center. I have to share a personal story with you regarding visits. I was listening to the regular Wisconsin Department of Health Services webinars. They indicated that several facilities have received a statement of deficiency because they were not allowing visits for residents. After I heard that I contacted the staff at the facility that my brother lives at in Altoona. They were just in the process of beginning to allow resident visits beginning in late February. I have only been able to see my brother once since all of this began back in March of 2020. I last saw him during an outdoor visit in September. The facility that he resides at would only allow virtual visits and this option was not ideal for my brother. I can honestly say that I know how family members feel when they cannot see their loved ones. I know the frustration that this causes. Maybe that is why it has been so important for me to allow family members regular outdoor visits when the weather permitted and then indoor visiting booth visits when the weather turned cold. As I indicated in the last newsletter, the guidance from the

federal and state regulatory agencies regarding visitation has not changed. I will keep everyone apprised of changes as I receive them.

Regular testing for COVID-19 continues with rapid antigen testing for staff in the Birchwood Apartments and Birch Haven Assisted Living. Tenants and residents do not need to be tested unless they are symptomatic. Staff in the Baldwin Care Center will complete regular weekly PCR testing that is sent to a laboratory for results. Residents in the Baldwin Care Center do not have to be tested unless they are symptomatic or we return to outbreak status if there is an employee or resident case.



Thank you this week to Peace Lutheran Church for making some cloth bags that can be used on walkers to carry items. Thank you also to Jean Christenson's daughter, Heidi Dumond for donating pastries. They were delicious!

*Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator*

