

August 5, 2021

Dear Lorien Residents and Families,

In my last letter to you in July, I said that I would be writing you on the 2nd Thursday of each month. However, in light of recent Covid-19 related events in Maryland and at Lorien these past few weeks, I felt it was important to write you tonight even though it's a bit early.

Not too long ago, the number of Covid-19 cases was declining and we were anticipating a light at the end of the tunnel. We were all excited about the new vaccinations and the possibility of visiting with family, returning to our workplace, taking vacations, and resuming our everyday lives. Lighter restrictions were also placed on masking in the community and visitation at Lorien. But now, sadly, the number of positive cases in Maryland is rising fast. In fact today, Lorien has 3 buildings on outbreak status. This is certainly not the news I had expected to deliver. However, I think it is important to share the realities of what we are currently experiencing.

Put simply, **vaccinated individuals are now testing positive, with or without symptoms. What is of greatest concern is that vaccinated individuals, who are asymptomatic, could be possibly spreading the virus to others.**

What does this mean? Here is an example of what has occurred in one of Lorien's buildings with a vaccination rate of 98% for our residents and 92% for our employees. One of our vaccinated caregivers noticed that a vaccinated resident had to take a short break while walking down the hall. This was unusual for this resident so the vaccinated team quickly tested her. Even though this resident was vaccinated and displayed no known Covid-19 symptoms (only slight shortness of breath), she tested positive. Further investigation revealed that this resident had been around two other vaccinated residents who also did not have any Covid-19 symptoms. They were tested as well and the results were also positive. As a result, all the residents and employees were tested and we found that an additional 3 vaccinated employees tested positive despite being asymptomatic.

This example illustrates a case in which the resident and all those in contact with her, were fully vaccinated, yet tested positive for Covid-19. This resulted in the building being placed on outbreak status. What we are all faced with now is a very frustrating and ever-changing situation. Previously, health officials were confident that vaccinated individuals were not likely to contract or transmit the COVID-19 virus. New data is now showing that is not the case. This creates additional complexity with contact tracing, as it is difficult to ascertain if the above resident had contracted Covid-19 because of an employee or a visitor.

Is there any bright light in this situation? Unfortunately, I cannot offer words of encouragement at this time because there are so many unknowns about the Delta variant and the other variants anticipated in the future. What I do know is that Lorien will continue to practice strict infection control methods, mandate masking of all of our employees, and strongly encourage **all of our** residents and employees to be vaccinated.

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I also want to share that at his press conference today, Governor Hogan confirmed that the Delta variant accounts for 100% of Maryland's recent positive cases. **He also urged nursing homes to mandate vaccinations.** We are taking this under serious consideration and as always, I will update you as soon as we know more.

For now, I'm asking for your help again. In light of the risks associated with the highly transmissible COVID-19 Delta variant, I'm requesting that you also take precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones as well. **Specifically, although Lorien's current visitation policy allows vaccinated individuals to be unmasked when visiting a vaccinated resident, I ask you to please consider wearing a mask during your visit.**

Visitation remains open for buildings that are not currently on outbreak status. Due to the rise in positive cases, visitation policies may quickly change. **Please continue to contact your loved one's building directly prior to your visit to be informed of possible policy changes. Additionally, if you have recently visited your loved one and then later find out that you had been exposed to someone with Covid-19 prior to that visit, we ask that you inform the building immediately.** This will help us be proactive in testing our residents and employees.

Please stay safe and reach out to me or your facility's Administrator if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lou Grimm, CEO