

Dear Residents and Family Representatives:

Earlier today, the New York State Department of Health issued a guidance for the upcoming holiday season to ensure the health, safety, and quality of life of nursing home and adult care facility residents. While it is natural during the holiday season for residents and families/friends to spend time together, facilities must continue to ensure that all residents and their loved ones strictly adhere to guidelines and policies regarding infection prevention and control measures (social distancing, hand hygiene, and wearing masks at all times except while eating). Please review the following directives which summarize the NYS DOH guidance:

- NYSDOH and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) **strongly recommend against residents leaving nursing homes or adult care facilities for home, family visitation or other social outings during the holiday season.** Data has shown that even small family gatherings may contribute to COVID-19 spread. **The CDC and NYSDOH recommend that individuals at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid in-person gatherings with individuals with whom they do not live.**
- Facilities are encouraged to find creative and innovative ways to celebrate the holidays without parties or social gatherings, including staff parties that could increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Nursing home and adult care facility staff should educate residents and families/friends who are contemplating taking a resident out of a facility for the holidays about the risks of leaving the facility and alternative virtual communication options.
- Nursing Home and adult care facility staff should remind residents to follow all recommended infection prevention and control measures outside the facility. This includes limiting close contact with others (maintaining physical distancing of six feet or more) and avoiding gatherings. Wear facemasks or cloth face coverings to the fullest extent possible, perform frequent hand hygiene, and avoid communal food or drinks.

If a resident goes out for family visitation or a social outing during the holiday season, the following requirements MUST be met for the resident's return to the facility for the safety of other residents and staff:

- **Residents will not be permitted to return until they are able to present a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result to Cobb's Hill Manor. Be advised, it may take several days to acquire a test appointment and an additional several days to receive results.**
- A family member or friend will be required to sign an attestation before the resident departs certifying they understand the above requirement and that they will implement transmission-based precautions for residents for 14 days in compliance with NYSDOH guidance and CMS directives if a negative test is not received. **This means the individual signing the attestation is required to house and care for the resident until a negative test result is received.**

- **Upon testing negative, residents who leave the facility** will be required to quarantine **after their initial NEGATIVE test for an additional period of 14 days.** If a resident shares a bedroom or bathroom, they may be required to relocate to a new room for the quarantine period. Residents are required to be tested a total of three times during the 14- day quarantine period at the facility, including on the first day and the last day that a resident is in quarantine.

An individual who refuses to comply with the Department of Health guidance and takes a resident out for the holiday is required to attest, in writing, that they:

1. Are aware of the risks involved with taking the resident out of the facility. This includes risking the lives of Cobb's Hill Manor residents and staff.
2. Will follow masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene practices according to CDC and DOH directives
3. Will notify the facility if the resident becomes ill within one week of leaving the facility.
4. Will notify the facility if anyone with whom the resident socialized tests positive for COVID-19, influenza, or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19/ Influenza within 14 days of the residents return to the facility.
5. Will communicate with the facility about a return date for the resident to the facility in accordance with the facility's policy.
6. Will quarantine or minimize contact (or assist the resident in doing so) to the extent safely possible before returning.
7. Will increase their monitoring for signs and symptoms of illness after a resident's return.
8. Will obtain COVID-19 and influenza tests for the residents if the resident develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza or if the resident had confirmed or possible exposure to COVID-19 or influenza while outside a nursing home or adult care facility.

Please contact the Social Work team if you have any questions. I sincerely appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this difficult period.

Christine Caplan
Administrator