



To: Arbor Acres Residents and Families
From: Andrew Applegate, President/CEO
Resident Council Advisory Committee on COVID-19
RE: Community Protocols Regarding the Omicron Variant
Date: December 30, 2021

Earlier today, the Resident Council Advisory Group on COVID-19 met to discuss the recent spike in positive cases and consider modifications to the protocols we updated at Thanksgiving, prior to the emergence of the new Omicron variant. We agreed that we know less today about this variant than we did in March of 2020 when COVID-19 first appeared.

As of this morning, 11 staff members and one independent living resident have tested positive. The resident and several of the staff are asymptomatic. In light of the family gatherings that have taken place over the past week, we feel that some changes to our current set of protocols are warranted. The following changes are effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice.

Guests:

1. Family and guests may no longer visit common areas, including dining venues. We ask that guests proceed from their vehicles directly to the residence they are visiting, wearing a mask if they must traverse through any common areas.
2. We ask that residents' family members and guests not come to the community unless they have received the COVID-19 booster. Even with the booster, we ask that guests who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 avoid coming to the community. If they have even mild symptoms, please ask your guests to avoid coming until they have received a negative test.
3. We will update the COVID-19 section of the Arbor Acres website (www.arboracres.org) with the most updated protocols for your convenience. As always, we will update our positive case counts as needed. Entrance signage will be updated over the coming days.

Dining:

1. As stated above, family members and guests may no longer visit common areas including dining venues.
2. Masks are required in the dining areas until you sit down to eat and must be donned anytime you leave the table. This includes when getting up to go back to the server or the restroom.
3. The maximum number of residents at the large tables is six.
4. The salad bar will continue to be manned by a dining staff member.

Activities:

Activities will continue for residents only. Masking is required at all times. We also encourage you to avoid events that appear crowded. While we will not limit seating, we advise residents to use good judgement when assessing the risk of exposure.

Funerals:

1. Arbor Acres is suspending funeral services that include non-residents unless that funeral is held outside at the Garden of Peace.
2. Knowing that residents value the opportunity to pay respects, in-person memorial services, limited to residents, will be permitted as long as masking protocols are followed.

Wellness Center:

1. Masks are required at all times for all inside exercise classes and use of the exercise equipment. Suzy Vaile will continue to make some classes available on Channel 1390 and Caremerge.
2. As time and weather permit, Suzy may be able to host classes outdoors during which masks will be optional.
3. Masking will not be required for the use of the pool; however, masks must be worn to and from the pool. Additionally, we are limiting the number of pool participants to 10. To manage this, we ask that you contact Suzy to make reservations for pool classes at svaile@arboracres.org or ext.1227.

Masks:

1. Omicron is extremely contagious! Current recommendations are that everyone use KN-95 masks instead of cloth or blue surgical masks. We will make masks available for purchase in the Gift Shop when we can. As you might guess, we are experiencing challenges finding them in spite of searching diligently, so do not be surprised if they are not always available.
2. To protect our most vulnerable residents, our first priority is providing those masks for staff in our licensed areas, who are also required to wear face masks.
3. As we can, we will secure additional masks for residents and for our independent living staff members who would then be required to wear them. In the interim, blue surgical masks are the standard for all independent living staff members.

Staff Vaccination Updates:

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been as proactive as possible implementing policies and procedures based on science and regulations. In these days of increasing uncertainty and easy access to news from reputable and less than reputable sources, it is easy to assume that what you hear is current guidance. At this time, “fully vaccinated” means having the two-shot series of either the Pfizer or the Moderna vaccine or a single shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, though that definition may change. We are conferring with our trusted sources about mandating the booster; meanwhile, we are making great progress in getting staff to take the booster. Since they must wait six months before receiving it, many are not yet eligible.

We are embarking on yet another new phase of a pandemic that has upended our lives in so many ways. With that in mind, I have a couple of final thoughts for you to consider.

1. Use discretion. Make choices that make sense for you, based on what you know about COVID-19 and your personal situation. Do not feel pressured to participate in events and activities when you do not feel comfortable.
2. WEAR YOUR MASK! This cannot be overemphasized. Besides being vaccinated and boosted, this is your single best defense against the infection. Period!
3. Limit your exposure by knowing the vaccination/booster status of your guests. Also, be extremely careful when venturing off campus. Keep your relationship bubble very small.

As we enter year three of this pandemic, it is easy to vacillate between ambivalence and despair. I want to caution against both. We cannot drop our guard nor can we lose hope. As I shared in the earliest days of the pandemic, hope is essential. It is the fruit of a learned capacity to suffer wisely, calmly and generously. As I look around this community, it is something we have in ample supply and it will be the means by which we proceed through these difficult times to better days.