



April 3, 2020

Dear Residents of RiverWoods Durham, RiverWoods Exeter and Birch Hill,

A few thoughts to take us into the weekend.

First, a thank you for your flexibility and patience. Turns out this is the first time *any* of us have lived through a global pandemic...so I guess we are all learning together. Rest assured that someday our operations will return to normal, but for now we have shifted a lot of our resources to the “safety and security” mode. That is what is top of mind for us every day; your safety and security.

I read an article today that noted, in terms of communication during this time, it was best to “aim for speed over elegance.” I think we have nailed that one! Our goal has been to keep you updated in a general sense (from me) and then a more specific sense from your Executive Director. That does lead to some adjusting as we go... notably when you ask us your questions regarding operational changes. Thank you for helping us fine tune the implementation of our decisions. As they say, “it’s a process.” We will need to continue to adjust.

At this point we have no known positive cases of COVID-19 in any of our communities. You have probably started to see news articles about positive cases in long term care/senior living communities in New Hampshire. Rest assured that if we do have a positive case, we will tell you, we will tell our staff, and we will put it on our website. It is the right thing to do; and we do the right thing. While I pray that day will never come, we should all know that it is a possibility. We will fight like hell to keep the virus out, but we will be ready if we are impacted.

You will start to see more staff wearing masks around the community. We have established a process and flow chart for who/how, and as we build supply that will extend. For now, a HUGE thank you to our residents who are sewing cloth masks. They will be used to extend the life of the “medical masks” for our staff and when our supply is high enough, they may be used universally by our staff to help keep you protected.

Cindy Martin, who is our Vice President of Quality and our chief clinical leader for the system, has been invaluable for us, examining the current guidance and providing clear direction to your local leadership and me. Cindy tracks the available data on an hourly basis, generally using a variety of resources from the CDC, the NH Department of Public Health, and CMS. One site that is interesting is <https://covid19.healthdata.org/projections> from The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). Their data suggests that peak hospitalizations in New Hampshire will come in about 15 days, and then some level of “normalcy” will come by early June. That’s a while from now, but it’s doable. And even if it ends up being a little longer, we will handle that too. This is hard and unfun, but we are tough and committed. And we are together.

I have had the pleasure this week to hear from many of you – thanking us for the dedication of our staff, and for the fine leadership of your Executive Director. I couldn’t agree more. During a crisis people generally show their true strength, and while I am not surprised, I am amazed at how strong and committed our staff has been during this crisis. I am impressed with our teams daily. I know you are too.

You’ve also asked me what you can do to help during this tough time. I have a few thoughts. First, don’t miss an opportunity to thank our staff. They are here every day because you matter to them. Any way you can let them know (from a safe six-foot distance) is A-ok with me!

Second, consider things that you can order online instead of having us stock or pick up. Many pharmacies deliver, and almost anything can be ordered online these days. Your Executive Director can provide you with some thoughts on how/where to shop in their next update, if they haven’t already done so. And finally, your family... they want to help too, right? If there are things that you specifically want, and we aren’t stocking in our country/community stores, and your family wants to shop for you, we are happy to receive a package from them for you at our screener area. We will deliver to you from there!

Through all this, we have been learning a lot. We are learning about people (and their amazing ability to lead, follow, and commit during a time of real need) we are learning about different ways to create community, we are learning the many ways that technology can be a game changer, and we are learning a whole bunch

of innovative and creative ways we can deliver the “service” part of our community. And we are also learning more of the benefits of being a family of communities. Our leadership teams are learning from one another and carrying forward a variety of great ideas, forged through teamwork and respect. It really is a thing of beauty.

These are times like no other. They have been hard, and they may get harder still, but we are in this together.

Stay healthy my friends.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine Vogel', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Justine Vogel
TRWG CEO