

December 29, 2020

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

With the holiday season behind us, and the vaccine distribution ahead, please take a moment to read the following updates and reminders:

- Community spread in New Hampshire has reached 14%-16% in our counties (Rockingham, Strafford and Hillsborough). The virus is here, and it is continuing to spread. We need to increase our personal vigilance.
- We now have positive cases at all communities, primarily staff members, but including at least one health care resident at each community.
- While staff members have tested positive in increasing numbers over these last six weeks, we have not had any spread from staff to IL residents. This is good news. The nature of the work from the IL staff keeps that risk limited, but please remember that risk is why we will ask you to leave your apartment for cleaning, work orders or other services. For the time being, it is best if you are not in there while we are. If you absolutely must be, we ask that you remain masked at all times and remain in a different room than the work being performed.
- There are things you can do to affirmatively limit your risk; these are not new, but as always are important reminders:
 - Wear your mask, over your mouth and nose, every time you leave your apartment
 - Maintain six feet distance from others
 - Wash your hands frequently
 - Keep your social circle small – the smaller your circle the smaller your personal risk
 - Eating with others that aren't in your household increases your risk. As much as you want to socialize with others, eating and drinking open you up to more risk.

Right now, all that we do individually and as a community is designed to *limit* risk, as we cannot eliminate it. We can limit the risk for ourselves and for our community by complying with the guidelines in place. We have heard some reports of residents allowing family into their apartment from a first-floor patio. That is not within our guidelines and **not allowed** right now. Simply because you have direct access into your homes that other residents do not does not mean that you should break our “no outside visitor” rule. Please remember that the choices you make impact your community as a whole.

As independent residents, you do still have choices that you can make for yourselves, hence the *independent* part. Some have asked why we are not “locking up” the communities again like we did in the Spring. Here are four basic facts that influence our decision making:

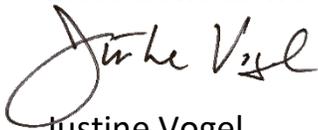
1. In the spring there was a strong belief that the virus was spreading via secondary transmission – so the fear was that if an infected person touched something in the campus it was likely to spread to others who may touch the same surface hours later. While this does seem to be a possibility, the science now says that it is not a primary cause of transmission. People are the primary cause of transmission.
2. Personal protective equipment was in short supply in the spring, making spread more likely in a health care setting because health care workers couldn’t fully protect themselves.
3. There were no therapeutic drugs in the spring.
4. In the course of 10 months, while there has been great spread in health center settings of CCRCs around the country, that has not happened in the Independent Living areas... so that is very good news. We didn’t know in the spring, but we have more information now. Contact with someone who has the virus, that is for longer than 10 minutes, and from less than six feet (particularly without a mask) does really seem to be the biggest risk. That is where we put our focus... limit the people, strongly encourage the mask, and keep your distance from others.

At any point in time, you can choose to self-quarantine. This means staying inside of your apartment and we will ensure that your meals, mail, deliveries, and groceries get to you. If this would make you more personally comfortable with our guidelines, we are ready, willing, and able to accommodate this for you.

But all is not dark! The vaccines are coming. Truthfully, the logistical roll out of the vaccination process from CVS has been pretty rugged so far, but this is a major undertaking with a monumental amount of detail and complexity. The great news is that the vaccines work. We anticipate a good portion of our staff and health care residents at RiverWoods Exeter will be vaccinated on Wednesday December 30th, and while we still await official dates for Birch Hill and RiverWoods Durham, we expect those to be in the next several weeks.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel, but we need to hang in there a bit longer. January may be tough, but I foresee us having green beer on St. Patrick's day. Think of progress in a stair step manner, first the vaccines, then some more ability to see family members and to get together in small groups... and then a great party over the summer. We will have earned it for sure!

For the time being, hang in there folks, and stay healthy my friends. We will share more news as we receive it.



Justine Vogel
TRWG CEO