



## **Covenant Living Special Update** **Terri Cunliffe / May 8, 2020**

Hello, I'm Terri Cunliffe, president and CEO of Covenant Living.

Over the past two months, we have reviewed the guidelines and recommendations from a variety of national, state and local authorities.

One of the latest recommendations is related to "global testing" for residents and employees in Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities. As test kits become more available, we can expect to see testing expand. Covenant Living will follow guidance from local health departments, however, as I mentioned last week, those test results are only valid for that moment in time. In order to validate a community as "virus-free," daily testing would be necessary, and that would require access to a significant number of test kits, which is just not feasible at this time.

### **Community Updates**

The number of communities reporting coronavirus cases did not change this week, and remains at 10 of our 17 communities. The majority of those cases are in Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living, with only a handful in Residential Living. And at Windsor Park, we are encouraged by the incremental improvements we are seeing. But don't stop praying for the residents and staff at all of our communities. We need those prayers, and especially at Windsor Park!

State and local health departments around the country have stepped up the frequency of Infection Control Surveys in Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities. Surveyors are assessing the availability of Personal Protective Equipment, confirming compliance with staffing requirements and cleaning protocols, and reviewing physical distancing practices. Surveys have been conducted in several Covenant Living communities, with zero deficiencies. That is an affirmation of the commitment to infection control practices by our nursing and housekeeping staff. They are doing an exceptional job to reduce the spread of this virus.

As we plan for the re-opening of services and amenities at our communities, we continue to wait for the lifting of stay-in-place orders and look to state and local officials for guidance on specific services. By now, you should be prepared for a slow and methodical process for reinstating services. Covenant Living will not re-open any service until we are confident our staff can execute the new procedures needed to prevent the introduction and spread of the coronavirus. But even as we re-open services, our communities will continue to practice physical distancing and require masks in common areas to prevent the spread of germs. Details related to the services opening in your community will be provided by your Executive Director.

## **Survival Perspective**

As I reflect on the past few months, I have come to understand this crisis from a survival perspective. Survival in three areas.

First, we just want to survive. The question nags at each one of us, “If I get the virus, will I survive?”

Second, we want to survive with our health. We are all intensely focused on protecting our health. The protocols we have put in place — physical distancing, self-isolation, the elimination of group activities — are for just that purpose.

Finally, we want to survive financially. This is so evident as we read about businesses all struggling for survival, and we hear about the 30 million people applying for unemployment benefits. The truth is, some organizations, large or small, will not survive the crisis. Covenant Living will not be one of those organizations. Our longstanding, prudent fiscal practices have provided us a solid financial foundation. Like most senior living organizations, we are facing the challenge of unplanned expenses and revenue disruptions, but we have recast our operating budget to accommodate those changes and we have taken the necessary steps to assure we remain financially viable. I will soon present a high-level summary of our financial approach in a separate video.

Since the beginning of March, we have provided these video updates weekly as we navigate our way through this pandemic. From here on in, we will reduce the frequency of these updates to every other week. You will continue to receive information related to positive cases at your community in the form of a letter or an email from your Executive Director.

## **Recognition of Nurses**

Before I close I want to recognize our nursing staff around the country.

This past Wednesday was National Nurses Day, which historically kicks off National Nurses Week. We cannot adequately express our appreciation for the nurses at our communities and across the nation. They are our frontline heroes. The photos you are seeing now are just a snapshot of the nurses working in our communities. Let’s stand up and applaud our nurses who have provided exceptional, unwavering, hands-on care, day-in and day-out, throughout the pandemic. Many of our nurses would describe their job as a calling, and it truly is. And so, to all our nurses and everyone who works in healthcare, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

## **Mother's Day**

Mothers' Day tends to invoke a wide range of emotions. Some hearts swell with pride for their children, while others will break with sadness for the passing of their own mother or even a child. This season often comes with a longing for family and those amazing hugs that we enjoy on this special day. I pray that whatever this day stirs in your heart, you are able to find peace and goodness in the spirit of Mothers' Day.

For me, my mom was a central force to the person I am today. She was always present, always supportive, and unyielding in her faith in me. I lost my mom in my thirties, but her impact on my life is so clear, even in just the few years she had to influence me. Yes, many of the things I do "just like my mom," I swore as a young person I would never do. And today, like many days, I think of her smiling at me from heaven.

We see God's intention for motherhood in Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the values she personified — faith, bravery, service, nurture, steadfast love and devotion. I see these values reflected in many of the Covenant Living team members that serve during this time, and in the residents who encourage those team members every single day!

My prayer for you is that no matter what your situation, you experience God's intention for motherhood on this day.

For those that had amazing mothers, I pray you can embrace the mothers that nurtured us, modeled for us and challenged us to become the people we are today.

For those of you that are mothers, I pray you can celebrate the blessing God provided and the fruits of your labor even among the challenges you've faced in this season.

For those of you who are not mothers, I pray you can find peace in the day.

For those of you grieving, I pray that you are comforted.

Enjoy your Mothers' Day, and know that you are always loved, always appreciated and always important.

Thank you and I will see you again in two weeks.