



October 13, 2020

Dear Smith Crossing Family,

We think it is helpful to provide a context so we can understand why the Will County Department of Public Health is so vigilant about ensuring all the precautions and protocols for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 designed to protect residents of senior living communities are observed.

This morning, we learned that senior living communities with skilled nursing care programs across Will County reported more than 40 cases of COVID-19 from this past Friday evening, October 9, through Sunday evening, October 11. Compare this weekend's 48-hour period with the fact that recent weekly reports averaged 13 new cases for all long-term care facilities in Will County.

While this is sobering news for all of us, we are very grateful that August 1 was the last date when one Smith Crossing resident received a positive test result for COVID-19. During this same 73-day period, eight staff members and third-party caregivers tested positive for the virus. Currently one of two employees, the most recent cases this month, has recovered and returned to work in accordance with CDC guidelines and the other person is recuperating at home. Everyone else has recovered.

We know our community-wide collaboration makes a difference. All of us—residents, staff members and our families—are challenged to sacrifice in so many ways—large and small—and it can be discouraging because there seems to be no resolution on the horizon. Please know how much we count on your patience and willingness to adjust—sometimes it seems almost by the hour—as directives from Will County and our own responses to occurrences of the virus dictate.

### ***Testing update***

We thank all 78 independent living residents who participated in Will County's COVID-19 onsite testing for them last Friday. And I am pleased to report every single person received a negative test result.

We especially appreciate residents' quick response to an opportunity that arose in less than two days and will strive to provide more advance notice next time. If any independent living residents were not available to be tested last Friday and would like to be tested, please contact Amie Kamba.

Today, all employees again are tested weekly and, with our most recent status, all residents in our healthcare settings are tested weekly.

### ***CMS Phase One***

Since two recent positive results for employees last week, Smith Crossing has returned to the most restrictive phase determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid. We will emerge from this status on Tuesday, November 3, if there are no additional cases of the virus among residents and employees.

While we are in this phase, only outdoor visitations are allowed. While independent living residents make their own plans, we ask family members of residents in assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care to call Mary DePaola at 708-326-2305 to schedule their visits.

To provide more comfort for outdoor visits, we are adding a tent with sides to the parking lot in front of the main entrance and three more protected spaces for visits near the assisted living patio.

We urge residents and their guests to be extra mindful about complying with Smith Crossing's precautions to abate the spread of COVID-19 that include

- Wearing a mask, observing social distancing at all times, and following hand-hygiene and sanitation practices
- Following our current visitor guidelines including but not limited to
  - Scheduling one weekly visit between 10am and 7pm
  - Planning only two people from the same household for a single visit
  - Being screened when signing a visitation form at arrival
  - Going directly to the designated area to meet a resident
  - Not eating or drinking during any visit
  - Reporting any symptoms of COVID-19 experienced within 72 hours of a visit at Smith Crossing
- Quarantining for 14 days if an employee, resident and prospective visitor has visited any hot spot designated every Tuesday by the City of Chicago

### ***On campus gatherings***

Today, our Oktoberfest celebration featuring German cuisine, beverages and entertainment provides another way for us to add a bit of spirited fun to our daily routine. We're glad residents are enjoying modified communal dining and limited small group activities. This week, we also opened The Bistro at 25 percent capacity for breakfast and lunch every day except Sunday.

Residents' small group activities and programs, socially distanced, continue in all areas of our community. We thank everyone for thoughtfully adhering to our precautions to abate the spread of the virus.

### ***Communication via email***

We are pleased so many people have signed-up to receive emails with our weekly letters and 12-hour notices when someone tests positive for the virus.

Because timely communication is key, especially as our circumstances can change quickly, we encourage residents and their families to talk about who they would like to receive email notifications. And because so many residents rely on email too, we encourage them to sign-up as well.

If you have not already done, please register to receive emails by visiting [COVID19SmithCrossing@SmithSeniorLiving.org](mailto:COVID19SmithCrossing@SmithSeniorLiving.org). Also continue to send your questions and suggestions to this e-address monitored by a senior staff person who asks the appropriate Smith employee to respond to you.

At Smith Crossing, we appreciate and truly consider all your suggestions about how to create a "new normal" so we can relish our sense of belonging.

Very truly yours,

*Amanda Mauceri*

Amanda Mauceri  
Executive Director