



October 27, 2020

Dear Smith Crossing Family,

Will County's positivity rate again rose to an unprecedented level of 9.6 percent today, up from 9.3 percent on Monday, October 26. In August during the first surge of COVID-19 requiring region-wide mitigation, the positivity rate peaked at 8.6 percent.

As this escalation gaining momentum on six of the last seven days, we should expect to see more safety measures instituted for our entire Region 7. Some are likely to affect our daily life here.

With four employees testing positive since October 20 and the elevated positivity rate of our region, Smith Crossing is now in CMS Phase One, based on the presence of the virus in our community and requiring the most restrictions, and Tier One, based on incidences of COVID-19 in our Region and requiring the fewest restrictions.

So, we urge everyone in our Smith Crossing family to consider how taking precautions—no matter how inconvenient or disheartening they may be—is the better path to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 within our community. Taking any and all shortcuts regarding our basic transmission precautions might provide temporary relief, but they also increase the likelihood of bringing the virus into our community.

With your sustained collaboration, our top priority is to keep our Smith Crossing family as safe as possible. Evidence that our precautions make a difference is that fact that all 326 residents and staff members who were tested for the virus during the week of October 12 received a negative result.

At times like this, we can experience tension between doing our best to protect all of us and pursuing our yearning to return to the vibrant social life we cherish at Smith Crossing. Because there clearly is uncertainty of what holiday season will be like this year, I encourage each of us to adopt a mindset of living a day at a time as we navigate an ever-changing world.

While our community has instituted numerous protocols and practices to mitigate the spread of the virus, we also are creating new ways to safely reintroduce amenities and programs to reunite residents and their families.

***Testing continues according Will County and IDPH regulations***

In accordance with Will County and IDPH guidelines, today we conduct mandatory testing for all employees and for all assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents.

On October 20, we tested a total of 297 people. All 110 residents tests results were as were those for 14 third-party caregivers. Of the 173 staff members tested, 169 received negative outcomes. Four employees tested positive; all four, who are experiencing mild symptoms, are at home recovering and will return to work in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Due to the spike in cases in Will County, we also encourage independent living residents, who are not required to be tested, to be tested on any

Tuesday afternoon between 1 and 4pm. No reservations required. Because close to 80 percent of people with positive results are asymptomatic or only experience mild symptoms, we thank so many residents for taking a test right on our campus.

***Prudence guides very limited communal activities***

***For independent living residents***

- Residents are required to call the Receptionist at extension 2300 to schedule their own 45-minute visits in the parlor just inside the main entrance
- The Dining Room is set for 25 percent capacity to observe social distancing and all diners also must comply with other precautions
- The Oak Room is now closed
- Some small group activities, listed on Channel 3 and flat screens in common areas, remain open on a limited basis

Today, we are distributing a second dining survey to learn your satisfaction and suggestions with our progress. We are committed to being responsive and ask you return your survey no later than this Friday, October 30.

This letter serves as a formal notification to residents, who are giving their key fob to a family member, that this practice must stop immediately. If a resident or family member has a concern about this mandate, please send an email to the e-address at the end of this letter or call me at 708-326-2326. We are only as safe and strong as our weakest point of access.

***Assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care residents***

- Even with our current restrictive status, residents can plan outdoor visits with their families in protected visiting areas near the assisted living patio
- To schedule a visit, call the phone number assigned to the areas where a resident lives
  - Assisted living and memory care, 708-326-2427
  - Skilled nursing care and transitional care unit, 708-326-2331
  - Greenleaf Rehab, 708-694-6000
- We already have begun delivering breakfast, lunch and dinner to residents and expect dining in their apartments will continue at least until Monday, November 9, if there are no new cases of the virus.
- All small group activities are cancelled
- Our staff is more frequently visiting with residents in their homes and encouraging physical exercise as well as social interaction
- We have increased the variety of programs available on Channel 3

***Employing essential precautions makes a difference***

Smith Crossing is enforcing the following practices to abate the spread of the virus that include

- Wearing a mask, observing social distancing at all times, and following hand-hygiene and sanitation practices including using supplies provided to disinfect the visitation area
- 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

***There's still time to make sure your vote counts***

Smith Crossing is committed to ensuring all residents who want to vote have their vote counted. If healthcare residents have not already secured and submitted an absentee ballot or voted by mail, please call the Receptionist at extension 2331 to request one.

Please return all completed ballots to the Reception Desk for each area no later than Monday, November 2, so Smith Crossing can deliver them to one of the drop boxes designated in Will County.

Smith Crossing also will provide safe transportation for independent living residents who opt to vote in person on Tuesday, November 3. Please call the Receptionist at extension 2300 to request a ride.

***Please share your ideas***

Please write to [COVID19SmithCrossing@SmithSeniorLiving.org](mailto:COVID19SmithCrossing@SmithSeniorLiving.org) so our senior staff member can ask our appropriate colleague who will respond to you.

As an extended family, let's dedicate ourselves to finding ways to encourage each other to keep the common good our highest priority. My colleagues and I are very grateful to our community of savvy and resilient residents, who generously share with us their life experiences and wisdom in so many ways. Together, we can rise to overcome the challenges of COVID-19.

Very truly yours,

*Amanda Mauceri*

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Executive Director