



November 12, 2020

To Members of Our Extended Smith Family,

It has been 247 days since we issued our first guidelines about COVID-19 to residents, staff members and their families. And 26 days later, one of our residents was the first person on our campuses to receive a positive test result for the virus. This person, who has recovered, remains in our community.

The unrelenting advancement of COVID-19 is both like and unlike most global and national disasters—earthquakes, famine, fires, hurricanes—we may experience from faraway or closer to home.

Like most, they seem to present suddenly when wide-ranging circumstances coincide. Unlike most disasters, however, this virus directly threatens our personal health and safety, continually challenging us and even stumping the experts.

Still, we hope that a reliable vaccine will be available soon. In preparation for that day, our organization has registered with the federal government so all residents and staff members are in line for receiving the vaccine. We will notify you as soon as direction for distribution and timeframes are set.

While I think it may be helpful to review some of the actions we have taken since March 10, 2020, we need to look ahead as we move forward together on combatting a second surge of COVID-19.

Our goal always remains the same: find a way to balance protecting the well-being of everyone in our Smith family while fulfilling our mission to enrich the lives of residents by providing ways to ensure their utmost independence.

### ***What's on the horizon?***

Every day, we are bombarded with data about the scope, the who and where COVID-19 has touched. Each of us personally knows someone affected by COVID-19. All of us—residents, employees, family members, friends and neighbors—have witnessed or experienced first-hand its devastating power.

Currently, Smith Crossing and Smith Village must address how surges in the very highest-ever positivity rates for COVID-19 in Illinois challenge us to achieve our goal.

- There has been a shift to the general population from those in nursing homes, which were the epicenter of the virus. A study by Johns Hopkins University and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reported that during the week of October 18, 61 percent of all new cases were in the general population.

After a nationwide decline in the number of cases in nursing homes early this summer, this shift is a big threat to older adults in senior living communities because visitors and staff may unknowingly reintroduce the virus to them.

- Because it is currently estimated that close to half of the people infected with the virus are asymptomatic, experts believe people are less strict about adhering to basic precautions—wear a mask, observe social distancing and practice hand-hygiene—that are proven deterrents to spreading the virus.
- Scientists and medical experts are learning more about how the virus spreads and why some are more likely than others to contract it. Data supports one of their findings: small family gatherings as well as bars and restaurants are among the places most likely for people to spread the virus.

### ***What does it mean for us?***

So how does this impact our Smith Crossing and Smith Village families?

We know we must broaden our awareness of what occurs in our nearby neighborhoods and suburbs as we take into account the virus' prevalence in regions where our communities are located.

Here is what we already have set in place:

- Virtual meetings of our executive team to address situations as they develop
- Protocols and systems to adjust our daily lives in numerous ways from communal gatherings for activities, dining, programs and trips away from campus to outdoor and indoor visits

- A protocol for immediately testing both returning and new residents in all levels of living and then quarantining them for a 14-day period
- Testing onsite for residents and employees every week and, more recently, the ability to conduct a rapid test as needed
- A complete inventory of personal protective equipment for staff caring for residents who have tested positive
- Communication outreach including weekly updates, daily notices when necessary, meetings with residents on our in-house TV channel, periodic virtual family meetings, and a dedicated e-address to send questions and suggestions as ways to fulfill our promise to keep everyone informed in a transparent and timely manner
- Requesting anyone traveling to any of the hot spot States and Territories designated by the City of Chicago to quarantine for 14 days upon their return before returning to work, leaving their residence or visiting one of our communities
- Regular sanitization of high-touch areas with disinfectant
- Education and very regular reminders about employing the three basic precautions—wear a mask, stay six-feet apart and wash hands.

### ***How can we be resilient?***

Today, we also dedicate ourselves to creating a culture of resilience that will support residents, staff members and their families as they experience the challenges—consequences of isolation and loss of daily routines, as well as feelings of loneliness, frustration, fear, anxiety and stress—that taking necessary precautions cause.

As we endure what feels like constant chaos, ever-changing restrictions, unknowns and uncertainty, which COVID-19 reigns upon us, these feelings are real and understandable.

We appreciate how residents and employees are putting aside their personal needs and wants for the common good by staying in their homes or forgoing family visits or working an extra shift.

During the early days of COVID-19, signs proclaiming “Heroes Work Here” popped up on our campuses and at so many places across the country. It’s important we champion the fact that “Heroes Live Here” too. We recognize the sacrifices they have made as well.

On a personal note, I am very grateful to our trustees for serving as our leadership team’s sounding board and source for expert counsel; our medical directors, staff members and third-party providers for going the extra mile again and again; residents for sharing their wisdom under very trying circumstances; and families for accepting the realities of life as we know them today.

Together we will continue to persevere, and with the support of our Smith Family we will emerge even stronger.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin McGee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin McGee  
President and Chief Executive Officer