

Homestead at Hamilton COVID Communication Hotline: 609-921-4037

Homestead at Hamilton Outbreak Plan

- 1) Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - a) **Our Team Members are our strength**, and we never doubted for a moment that they are essential! Having been certified 3 years in a row as a Great Place to Work, 90% of our team members stated, ‘My Work has Special Meaning – this is not just a job’. This heartfelt dedication of our team led to tireless efforts during this incredibly trying time.
 - b) **We deserve to be protected**. Senior housing, including Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care deserve to be supported and protected, just as hospitals and nursing homes do. We need to ensure that all communities have the Personal Protective Equipment, testing and funding needed to protect our residents and America’s most vulnerable citizens as well as our Team Member Heroes.
 - c) **Communication is critical**. When life as we know it changes, communication is all the more essential. Transparency, one of our Core Values, was immediately put into practice as we speak the truth in honest and open conversations with team members, residents and families, sharing what we know when we know it, and not being afraid to admit we don’t always have all the answers. With the ever-changing protocols, guidance and recommendations coming from the WHO, CDC and state and local authorities, communication became much more frequent and necessary as we navigated together these unfamiliar waters.
 - d) **Engagement comes in many different packages**. When our community life changed and we were no longer allowed to gather to share meals and engage in the many social, spiritual, intellectual and physical opportunities we had come to love, we embraced new ways to help residents THRIVE! We learned to use technology to bring programs to them. We learned we can still be together, while distanced. We learned that family is everything and ensuring residents stay connected with family through the use of technology was as essential as the air they breathe.
 - e) **We can never stop learning**. We have always known that training is essential in any healthcare setting. When faced with a new unprecedented virus that changed the way the world lives, we found that we can all learn new things. Our team members are constantly trained on new procedures. Residents learned new things as well - and taught us a few things too!
 - f) **Infection Control adherence**. We have learned the necessity of implementing and following the state and county guidelines as well as company protocols to ensure all residents and team members are free from infectious disease and are following all guidelines to decrease the spread of this COVID 19. We have ensured that required education and resources are in place to adhere to all the recommended guidelines we must follow.

- 2) **Our ongoing strategies for communication** with team members, residents and families pertaining to any infectious disease outbreaks and our mitigating actions implemented to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission are outlined below. These communication strategies will be implemented at a minimum weekly if normal operations of the community will be altered and when visitation is curtailed.
 - a) Email – email updates are sent at a minimum cadence of weekly to keep residents, team members and families updated on all things Homestead. This frequent communication allows us to share updated protocols and highlight any changes.
 - b) Phone – Our team is always available by phone to answer any questions and help guide through whatever comes.
 - c) Caremerge – Our innovative Caremerge technology allows our residents and families to communicate with team members privately or allows our team members to share updates to all. Viewing our scheduled programming, pictures of engagement and updates about what’s happening at Homestead is as simple as downloading an app on your phone!

- 3) **Virtual Communication with loved ones** – we have written standards, policies and procedures for ensuring residents can FaceTime, Skype or otherwise virtually visit with the ones they love during any outbreak of infectious disease or emergency that would prevent them visiting in person. It is the practice for the community to have several hours of designated time set aside each week to allow residents and families to connect when desired and with the assistance of our team members.

- 4) **Staffing plan** - to ensure we have the team members we need during an infectious disease outbreak or emergency, we are continually recruiting to find the best talent in licensed nurses, wellness associates, med techs, cooks, servers, and housekeepers and have contracted with two partner staffing agencies to ensure we have the team members we need when we need them. Our staffing schedule is developed at a minimum of two weeks in advance and is on a 4-week cycle that allows us to 1) first attempt to cover any open shifts with our own team members, and 2) partner with our staffing agencies to provide for our coverage needs.