



Dear Families,

I know there have been concerns about what has been happening here regarding the positive COVID-19 tests. Here is timeline of events:

1. On September 30th, a staff member notified us that they had tested positive for COVID-19. We immediately removed the staff member from the schedule and had the individual retested. They tested positive again on the 3rd of October
2. As a result of having a staff member test positive, Thurston County Health scheduled testing for all residents and staff on October 5th, 2020. All residents and staff were tested.
3. A total of 13 staff have tested positive after two rounds of testing were completed by Thurston County. All have quarantined at home. Testing will continue until all staff, who did not test positive for COVID-19, test negative twice. Many of the staff who tested positive are now returning to work, following the recommendations of the Thurston County Health Department.
4. All residents were tested on October 5th. Test samples were collected by staff from Thurston County. Unfortunately the majority of the test results took over a week to be processed leaving us in the dark regarding the extent of the spread among residents. Also, eighteen of the tests were damaged in transit to the laboratory and needed to be destroyed. All residents were then retested with results received on the 16th. All positive residents are cohorted together. Those that tested negative were asked to isolate in their rooms. Residents that tested negative will be tested and retested to confirm the negative results.
5. We have been working closely with Thurston County Public Health. We have followed all their guidelines and CMS guidelines. Thurston County has been supportive and complementary of our efforts and infection control procedures. The staff will continue wearing PPE and with their infection control procedures until all residents have tested negative for COVID-19 twice which is typically about 20 days after the last resident tests positive.

The positive COVID-19 tests have changed some of our operations – small group activities and congregate dining were stopped and outside visits were suspended. New residents are also not being admitted at this time. I know it has been heartbreaking. The staff member who acquired COVID-19 and brought it into the building did so from an identified outside source. The staff member was asymptomatic. Prior to COVID-19 entering our community all staff were wearing PPE – facemasks or shields/goggles and gloves. All infection control precautions indicated by CMS and Thurston county were implemented. These measures helped but were not 100% effective in keeping the virus from entering our community.

Additional precautions have been put in place. We have purchased Accushield Kiosks to assist with the screening of staff and guests. Our screening questions have been uploaded to the Kiosk. The Kiosk will also take staff and residents temperatures alerting supervisory staff immediately if someone has an elevated temperature.

Thank you for your understanding during this difficult time. I realize that ours is not a unique or new story. We have worked at keeping COVID-19 out of our community and have been successful up until October 5th. With the number of COVID-19 cases increasing in the surrounding community, it made it more difficult to keep the virus out of Garden Courte.

Sincerely,

Nanette Wilkins, Director of Operations