

To: LifeSpire Residents, Families and Team Members
From: Vice President of Clinical Services Paula Bolton
Date: November 4, 2020
Re: Holiday celebrations

The LifeSpire management team wants residents and families to spend time together as much as possible. We know it's crucial for residents' wellbeing, emotionally and physically, to stay connected with their families and others. We plan to facilitate connection and provide accommodations to the extent possible now and during the holiday season.

We are required to change visitation processes, at times, according to county positivity rates—updated weekly—and as test results are received for both residents and team members. This can be challenging for communities as they strive to stay in compliance with standards set forth by various agencies, but not as overwhelming as residents and families not seeing loved ones. It is our mission to empower residents' choice while keeping them safe. Achieving the right balance between safety/protection and choice is challenging in these uncertain times. Please keep in mind that our decision making is based on what we feel is best for residents while following regulations and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

In part, our on-campus visitation practices will be dependent on circumstances we cannot control, and such changes will be communicated as they have been previously and as quickly as possible.

We understand residents and their families will consider visitation at family members' homes more frequently during the holidays. VDH recommends that families consider the transmission rate of COVID-19 within the community at large and the county in which the resident is traveling to; the higher the transmission and/or positivity rate, the higher the risk of disease transmission. This information can be found [online](#), or from community leadership.

The CDC recommends that residents and families consider the following when making a plan for holiday gatherings:

- Hold an outdoor celebration if possible (if not, try to avoid crowded, poorly ventilated indoor spaces). Consider opening windows to the extent it is safe and feasible.
- Gather with the least number of individuals as possible and possibly host on a different day or week to allow for travel during less busy times.
- Wear a mask.
- Have space available to wash hands or have hand sanitizer available.
- Maintain a distance of six feet or more from people
- Minimize gestures that promote close contact (avoid hand-shaking, elbow/fist bumps, hugs, kissing).
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Designate one person to serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Families should drive their own vehicles when picking up residents from the community to reduce possible exposure to COVID-19.
- Avoid the busiest travel times if using public transportation; travel during non-peak times when there are likely to be fewer people.

Since we know holiday celebrations include gatherings of families/friends, crowded spaces and travel that may put individuals at increased risk for COVID-19, we have a plan to reduce the risk of transmission from residents who spend time away from the community during the holiday to residents who remained at the community during the holiday.

Here is our plan regarding the upcoming holidays, knowing that the process may have to be altered (postponed, canceled or limited) at any time, unfortunately, even at the last minute:

Residents residing in health care, assisted living or memory support:

- All residents will continue to be monitored closely for any signs of illness so rapid identification can be made and rapid response provided.
- Any resident who leaves the community to celebrate the holiday will be asked to remain in their apartments for a minimum of seven days upon return (except for essential medical appointments).
- After seven days of quarantine, the resident will be tested for COVID-19 and when a negative test result is received, the quarantine will be discontinued (any resident who declines a test on day eight will need to quarantine for a total of 14 days); the test will be sent to the lab for processing which may take 24 to 72 hours. Quarantine will continue while awaiting results.
- During this seven-day period, the communities' team members will provide increased opportunity for connection between residents and family members through frequent virtual communication. As communities have been doing during COVID-19 response, residents will be provided with supplies to pursue activities that can be carried out in their apartments.
- During this seven-day period, the communities will arrange for compassionate care visits if warranted. This can be discussed with a member of clinical leadership at the community on an individual basis.

Residents residing in independent living are strongly encouraged to:

- Continue to self-monitor and report immediately any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 – fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea.
- Wear a mask.
- Social distance (at least six feet) from others as much as possible.
- Avoid community gathering areas for at least seven days, to the extent possible, if attending a holiday celebration away from the community.

There are individuals who, per the CDC, should not attend in-person holiday celebrations. **We recommend residents not leave the community if one of the following applies:**

- Diagnosed with COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19
- Waiting for COVID-19 viral test results
- Exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days

This plan above was a result of collaboration with the VDH epidemiologist/infection control team, our four LifeSpire medical directors and community leadership teams.

We have appreciated cooperation with frequently changing processes. We understand the changes can be overwhelming and frustrating and are grateful for continued understanding and support.

We know this is a lot of information and if you have questions, or would like to discuss your individual situation, please contact your community's leadership team directly.

Thank you.