

*Fulfilling Our Promise*



# Steere House

April 28, 2020

NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER

Dear Family and Friends:

As Steere House continues to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, we want to provide you with an update on how it has impacted us since last Friday and the steps we're taking to address it.

Today, all residents at Steere House have been swabbed for COVID-19 testing per the newest guidance of the Rhode Island Department of Health.

We have unfortunately felt the virus's direct effects here at Steere House. We currently have COVID-19 cases. When a resident test is positive for COVID-19, we take great care to ensure they're made comfortable and are under supervision. We call the patient representative if a resident is positive. While caring for residents our staff wear appropriate protective equipment that may include medical gowns, gloves, eye protection and masks.

We have been informed that staff members working in our facility have tested positive and are quarantined at home. We're currently following the "Criteria for Return to Work for Health Care Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19" guidance which was issued by the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In compliance with guidance and the latest Rhode Island Department of Health publicly announced protocols for nursing homes, all employees will be tested this week on Friday. This testing will be conducted by the Rhode Island Department of Health onsite at Steere House.

As the number of overall cases in our country and RI increase exponentially, we expect there will be additional cases at our facility because this disease especially impacts people who live in nursing homes.

Please know that we have followed, and will continue to do so, all guidance set forth for patient care, employee safety, and efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 as provided by the RI Department of Health (DOH) and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These guidelines can be found here: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Nursing-Homes.aspx>, and we remain in constant contact with DOH and CMS.

While we strive for transparency in everything we do, please know that we are bound by federal guidelines under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which protect the privacy of our residents and staff, who may not want their condition known. Our medical director follows all established federal laws in notifying families of any change in the medical condition of their loved ones. Our residents are our first priority.

Prior to each shift, staff are required to have their temperature recorded in our atrium and answer a series of questions to ensure they are not exhibiting any known COVID-19 symptoms. Any employees who develop symptoms during a shift are immediately sent home. At that point, they are directed to quarantine at home, and we assist them to arrange for testing.

We also follow a rigorous sanitation regimen that in some cases exceeds, all state and federal guidelines. We have increased the daily volume of cleaning done in common, medical and residential areas.

Although this can be a challenge at times when providing medical care, our facility continues to practice safe distancing guidelines by limiting the number of people in one area.

Steere House appreciates your understanding as we continue to vigorously enforce the state's decision to restrict all visits into the facility at this time. This is certainly frustrating when wanting to see loved ones, but we want to do everything in our power to keep our residents healthy. We continue to encourage family members to communicate and appreciate your patience with our team as they may not be able to immediately take a call from you if they are busy providing care.

We will continue to provide you with periodic updates with as much information as we can on our efforts to combat COVID-19. On behalf of everyone at Steere House, I want to thank each of you for your continued patience and prayers. It means a great deal to us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie H. Richard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julie" being more prominent.

Julie H. Richard, NHA, MA  
Executive Director

JR

Cc: File