

April 7, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members, and Staff:

I want to start by thanking you for your patience and understanding during these trying times. I'm writing to you today because the CDC has updated its guidelines about the use of masks, and you will see a change in the way Staff are utilizing masks.

From the earliest days of this health crisis, we have followed Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) and state and local direction. We are also fortunate to be part of a larger organization, and have worked collaboratively with the Asbury Communities Clinical Team to establish protocols and procedures designed for prevention of the spread of this virus.

So you might be asking yourself: With the guidance constantly evolving, how do I know what to do?

For the general public or residents, the CDC now recommends the use of a cloth mask while continuing to maintain a physical distance from others of 6 feet. This cloth mask is primarily a barrier for protecting others from your respiratory moisture, such as sneezes or coughs. There are multiple websites for making your own masks that we encourage you to view and make your own. While a cloth mask may be the recommendation, following the stay-at-home advisory and maintaining the appropriate distance is the better barrier, in addition to rigorous hand washing and the regular cleaning of your environment.

For residents who do not have access to these websites, we are working through a plan to help. We will be sending directions to those who want to make masks for themselves. These patterns are for the masks that involve no sewing and are very easy to make.

The CDC directive also now states that use of masks has been expanded to include all Staff. Albright Staff who work in a clinical setting will continue to don a surgical mask while interacting with residents in all levels of care. The CDC update also requires non-clinical Staff, and those who do not routinely come in contact with residents, to wear a mask as a means of reverse protection or reverse isolation. We are meeting this requirement with the use of the cloth (homemade) masks. We are utilizing donated masks or, as noted above, encouraging Staff to make their own. As a means of ensuring immediate compliance with this recommendation, we will provide two disposable masks to Staff that they may re-use until they are able to make or obtain their own cloth masks. Staff will receive, when available, additional cloth masks

prepared by residents and volunteers as they become available from those sources. This provides some measure of protection from outside air and particles but is primarily a barrier for protecting others from the person who is wearing it. We are grateful to the volunteers who have made and donated these masks to our staff.

This expanded use of masks also begs the question: Does Asbury have enough personal protective equipment {PPE}? PPE refers to the protective items or garments worn to protect from hazards that can cause injury. CMS provides guidance for the appropriate PPE in various clinical situations.

Our comprehensive COVID-19 care protocol, which has been in place for several weeks, clearly delineates the importance of using PPE for the safety of those who live and work here. We have communicated regularly with Staff that we must be mindful of the inventory of supplies and to be mindful of utilizing PPE, including masks, appropriately per CMS protocol during this pandemic.

While we currently have an appropriate supply of PPE, our supply management team is following every lead to purchase additional PPE, but we all know there's not an unlimited supply. That's the reality we face. That's why it's so important that each one of us uses PPE appropriately.

Please know that every decision we have made and will continue to make is centered on a single guiding principle: to do everything we can to keep residents and Staff safe. Nothing matters more. There will surely be new guidance and more updates to come, and we will communicate with you in a timely manner.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these trying times. As a reminder, you can go to [Asbury.org/COVID19](https://www.asbury.org/COVID19) to learn more on how we're combating COVID-19. If you have any questions, please call our dedicated number related to COVID-19 at 301-250-2115.

We are all on the same team. We are #AsburyStrong, and we are united by our shared mission to serve and protect our community.

Sincerely,



Lennea Brown
Executive Director