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This message is going to associates, and to residents and family members on our community distribution list.

June 19, 2020

Dear Residents, Family Members & Associates,

I am grateful to everyone for the extraordinary efforts to keep our wonderful community as safe as possible during a world-wide pandemic. I am reminded of a quote I shared before, "Each and every one of us has an obligation to exercise personal responsibility for ourselves, for our families, for our coworkers and for our neighbors." As residents and family members of Asbury Place Kingsport/Baysmont and Steadman Hill, I once again urge you to take the obligation of responsibility for one another seriously. And I ask you to join me and the leaders of our community in our commitment to continue to make the health, safety and well-being of all who live and work here our highest priority. We all have a responsibility to support and protect each other.

Last week I ended my message with a Paths to Reopening update to watch for updates this week about visitation, and that is the focus of my communication today.

**KINGSPORT/BAYSMONT HEALTH CARE & STEADMAN HILL ASSISTED LIVING**

As I have previously shared, we are guided by many different plans and requirements placed upon us by numerous federal, state and local agencies. This is especially true given the recent announcement by the TN Governor about opening nursing home visitation. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provides federal regulations and directions that we must follow. CMS delegates some items to states or local jurisdictions that we must also follow, for example, to the TN Department of Health.

What was not shared in the Governor's announcement or in the media sound bites, are the multiple criteria and requirements that must be met in order to begin limited nursing home and assisted living visitation. A few examples of visitation prerequisites include, COVID-19 cases on the campus and in the local area must be taken into consideration, staffing levels for facilities must be at required levels, routine weekly testing of staff must be completed, screening requirements for visitors must be implemented along with special infection control precautions, a specially trained staff member must be present for each visit and remain with the resident and visitor for the entire time, access to personal protective equipment must be readily available, and COVID-19 cases in the external community must fall below certain thresholds.

The limited visitation opportunities outlined by the TN Department of Health include: designated outdoor space dependent on permissible weather conditions and other precautions, a specially designed visitation booth with direct access from the outside and other precautions, and/or in-room visitation with proof of the visitor having a negative COVID-19 test result during the 72 hours preceding every visit and other precautions. Additionally, implementation of the guidelines must be made in consultation with our Medical Director or attending physicians on a case-by-case basis.

We learned about the Governor's announcement at the same time you did – when it was actually made – and it was unexpected by health care providers. The TN Department of Health implementation expectations, including the multiple criteria and requirements, were provided after the fact. To date, few facilities have started the visitation due to the planning and preparation required to meet the prerequisites and other requirements that were not known until recently. Additionally, the requirement of weekly testing of staff members is a challenging hurdle to overcome given limited guidance we have received from the Tennessee and County Departments of Health. We are developing an internal plan now and will share it with the Departments for approval. It is critical that we remain in compliance with requirements in order to maintain our operating licenses.

We understand the impact of the visitation restrictions over the past three (3) months and are as anxious as you are to gradually lift some of the restrictions. The leadership team of Asbury Place Kingsport/Baysmont and Steadman Hill and I are diligently working on the requirements and processes that must be followed. I am also working closely with Asbury's COVID-19 Command Center on routine access to testing materials.

When we are able to offer limited visitation opportunities, it is important to know that if we have even one (1) new resident or associate positive case, visitation must be stopped immediately and would not be started again for at least 28 days. In the event of an additional positive case within those 28 days, the clock starts over again for 28 days. This is another example of the requirements put in place by the TN Department of Health.

I want to assure you that we are doing everything possible to make new visitation opportunities available to you as soon as we possibly can. We understand this is frustrating for you and your loved ones. We continue to make the health, safety and well-being of all who live and work here our highest priority during these unprecedented times. And we must remain committed to operating within all applicable regulations and requirements.

We are grateful to be able to offer increased opportunities for window visits. Please note the following:

- If you would like to schedule a window visit with your loved one, please reach out to Rachael Santiago at [rsantiago@asbury.org](mailto:rsantiago@asbury.org). Please note the following location-specific details for window visits:
  - Baysmont Healthcare window visits will be held at the dining room window.
  - Baysmont House window visits will be held at the patio door.
- Screening of visitors, according to current campus procedures, will be completed.

- Windows must remain closed and masks must be worn by visitors at all times.
- Since common area visiting windows must be cleaned in between visits, we ask that you keep your visit to no more than 45 minutes to allow for 15 minutes of cleaning.
- Also, we continue to offer “virtual visits.” We are working with residents and their families to coordinate video calls through FaceTime or Skype or other tools. Residents and families are encouraged to contact Lauren Huddleston at [lweaver@asbury.org](mailto:lweaver@asbury.org) or 423-797-6605 for Independent Living and Rachael Santiago at [rsantiago@asbury.org](mailto:rsantiago@asbury.org) for the Health Care Center and the Baysmont House to set up an appointment to video chat.

## APARTMENTS

At the present time, the directives from the TN Department of Health, apply to our entire campus. Therefore, we are unable to offer new visitation opportunities at the present time. We are hoping that in the near future this interpretation will be adjusted. Guidelines have been established and will be shared as soon as possible.

I appreciate your continued understanding and cooperation. The leadership team and I value the opportunity to fulfill our mission to do all the good we can for those we serve. You and your loved ones are part of our family. As I have said before, and will continue to say, we are in this together. And we will get through this together. We are #AsburyStrong.

Sincerely,

**Aaron Roop**  
Executive Director  
Asbury Place Kingsport



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