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Saint Mary's & COVID-19: Update #78

Hello!

I hope your spring is off to a nice start. A few brief updates to share with you.

Generally speaking, in the community at large, a lot of things seem like they're returning to "normal." The Erie County positivity rate has dropped to 2.5% and the transmission rate is now at low. There are some concerns across the nation about a potential increase in infection due to the BA.2 subvariant of COVID-19.

The decrease in positivity and transmission rates allow Saint Mary's to continue to lift some restrictions.

In regards to visitors, visitors can now order from St. Joe's Café and eat in the room with the resident if the visitor is up-to-date on their vaccines. Visitors should take their food directly to the resident room; they are not permitted to eat in the dining room with the resident and should still limit travel through the building, avoiding common areas. Visitors are permitted to bring pets inside the building with them so long as hand hygiene is followed after a resident has contact with the animal. As before, pets must be leashed, not be a nuisance to other guests, and be up-to-date on their vaccines.

In regards to residents, residents in different areas of care may intermingle once again. For instance, this means that Skilled Nursing residents and Residential Living residents can both attend Mass in the Chapel at the same time (however, visitors are still not permitted to attend Mass in the Chapel with residents yet). **Carriage Home residents** may once again participate in activities and eat in the Dining Room. Social distancing and universal masking policies are still to be followed.

In regards to our employees, our staff is no longer required to wear face shields except in certain circumstances. For employees who are not up-to-date with their boosters, testing will continue but drop to once a week.

With Easter approaching, remember that residents are permitted to come and go as they please but should keep us informed of their plans so we know who is in the building in case of emergency. Keep in mind, that residents who are not "up-to-date" on their vaccine and boosters will undergo a quarantine period upon their return if they are outside the building for more than 24 hours. Our current resident vaccination rate is 93%.

Being "[up-to-date](#)" now means that you have received your primary vaccine series as well as the first booster when eligible. A second booster has been approved by the FDA and CDC for three groups of people: those who are severely or moderately immunocompromised, those over the age of 50, and those who have received the J&J vaccine as their primary series and first booster.

What hasn't changed? Facemasks! **Facemasks are still required for everyone.** Social distancing should continue to be observed as well and remember to wash your hands frequently. Please continue to sign in at the AccuShield kiosk at the front desk and do not visit if you are sick. Remember, we all play a part in helping to keep our community of seniors (and each other) safe!