



TO: PMMA Residents, Family Members and Visitors
FROM: Bruce H. Shogren, President/CEO
CC: PMMA Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership & Executive Directors
RE: COVID-19 Update – “**STAY THE COURSE**” – *Leadership in Unchartered Waters*
DATE: January 18, 2021

It is an understatement to say 2020 was a very difficult year for every one of us. We all could not wait for the year to end, leaving the pandemic behind us because we are all COVID fatigued.

Well - Welcome to 2021! Who would have dreamed that in the first month of 2021 we would still be addressing the same coronavirus issues that we thought would not be part of our new year:

- Continued increases in positive cases infecting our resident and staff populations, along with the nation reaching a staggering total of 22, 619,353 cases and 376,283 COVID-19 deaths, as of January 11;
- Ongoing testing based upon county positivity rates that continue to be high;
- Staffing shortages and the emotional toll on our staff due to resident deaths related to COVID-19 infections;
- A slow rollout of vaccinations nationally – as of January 11, 25,480,700 vaccines distributed, with only 8,987,320 vaccinations administered;
- Lower levels of vaccines administered due to a distrust of the Coronavirus vaccinations, causing staff and resident refusals to get the vaccination. There are various reasons for these refusals, ranging from a *wait and see* reasoning to fear of side effects to cultural, religious and historical reasons; and,
- COVID-19 FATIGUE!

The leadership of PMMA is deeply concerned about the above points, but the most concerning, is the fatigue this pandemic has caused amongst our residents, families and staff members. The concern is real and continuing, as we learn of a new mutant strain of the coronavirus that appears to be more contagious than the original. As soon as we learned of this new strain in the first several days of January, we quickly learned it had already been found in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia and New York. Scientists project that the B.1.1.7 strain will account for the majority of new cases in the United States by March 2021.

What does that mean for PMMA’s residents and staff members? It means we may experience increased cases of the coronavirus due to this more contagious B.1.1.7 strain. And, the most troubling element, of this heightened pandemic, is that we enter this battle with much of our staff members, residents and families, and the general public being COVID FATIGUED. This fatigue may cause more people to lack patience with the continued mandates to wear masks, social distance, wash your hands frequently and limitations/restrictions on travel, working, visitations, etc.

Truly no one could have imagined the coronavirus pandemic would have lasted this long. It seems these past nine months are a never-ending bad dream framed to test all of us in navigating these tumultuous and uncharted waters.

Yet, this pandemic with its continuous demands has proven PMMA is blessed with a history of being a leader in the senior living industry because of its heritage of quality care. This proud heritage and experience give us hope that together we will all get through this pandemic.

And yes, I did say blessed because during its more than 70-year life span PMMA has had generation after generation of committed, dedicated employees who have lived the mission of “**providing quality senior services guided by Christian values**”. Their faith, strength and courage to serve others is carried on by this generation of leaders. They are a blessing that is forging the way through these uncharted waters of serving others during a relentless pandemic. And, we continue to be blessed with generations of wonderful residents and understanding families. What a wonderful legacy and gift all of you will be leaving for future generations of PMMA residents, families and employees who may also face uncharted waters.

This seemingly unending pandemic keeps our leadership up at night, worrying about the safety and health our residents and employees. There are not a lot of options as to how we will be able to eliminate the stranglehold that the pandemic has on our daily lives. That is why we urge our residents, family and staff members to participate in the COVID-19 vaccination program.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that *your best protection from COVID-19 will be a combination of getting a COVID-19 vaccine, wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, and washing your hands often. No one tool alone is going to stop the pandemic*. To learn more about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination, visit the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>

It is our duty and responsibility to our colleagues, families, most of all, our residents, to keep everyone safe, and we can only do that by building immunity through vaccinations.

As I stated in prior letters, the members of the Board of Trustees and the Senior Leadership team are proud of the efforts of our staff members, and of our residents and families for their support and trust during this unprecedented time. Because of all of you, PMMA is truly blessed. We want you to know that our prayers are always with you.

In closing, I want to share a prayer that was recently written for our PMMA residents and employees by our Board Chair, Jim Cook, along with always asking for God’s blessings for our employees and residents.

PRAYER FOR GOD’S GUIDANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Almighty and gracious God,

It’s a pandemic, God. Reaching around the world. Affecting virtually everyone – directly or indirectly.

And part of the group that has been affected most directly – hit the hardest – are the people in our care. Folks all over the world - in New York City, Venice Italy, Cape Town South Africa are vulnerable, testing positive, getting sick, and, too often, dying.

And the same thing is happening in our communities. Our vulnerable residents and our caregivers and support staff are at risk and getting sick – and, too often dying.

Our first line staff is overworked. They are only human, and yet giving super-human effort. And when that effort sometimes proves inadequate – they are devastated.

Give them the strength they need and the skills they need.

Our Senior Leadership is overworked. They are only human, and yet giving super- human effort. Give our leaders the insight, the wisdom, the compassion they need to lead effectively.

Watch over our residents. Watch over our staff. Keep them all as safe as possible.

And help us realize that the work we do here is also important. Our hands are not touching those who need a gentle touch. Our voices are not heard by those who need an encouraging word. But our work helps to make it possible for others to do that vital work.

Guide our work, guide our conversation. May our decisions be good in your sight.

AMEN

God’s Blessings,



Bruce H. Shogren
President/CEO