



News Release

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CONTACT: Lisa Diehl, PMMA Communications Director, ldiehl@pmma.org or 316-685-1100

Employees, residents test positive for COVID-19 at Newton Presbyterian Manor

NEWTON, Kan. – Three essential health care workers, one non-direct care employee and seven residents have tested positive for COVID-19 at Newton Presbyterian Manor.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 105 employees and health care residents were tested for COVID-19 as part of Newton Presbyterian Manor's ongoing outbreak and surveillance testing.

"As the positivity rate for COVID-19 tests in Harvey County continues to hover around 20 percent, we continue to focus on the health and safety of our residents and employees," said Jeanne Gerstenkorn, PMMA's vice president for health and wellness and infection preventionist. "It is vital that the entire Newton community take basic precautions to help stop the spread of this highly contagious virus."

The seven health care residents have been placed in COVID-19 isolation and are being care for by designated staff, who are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention infection control protocols and physician's orders.

We will follow CDC and KDHE guidelines for when the resident may come out of isolation. Under the current guidelines, symptomatic residents may leave isolation when at least 72 hours have passed since resolution of the resident's fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and the resident's symptoms have improved and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. Asymptomatic positive residents will quarantine for 14 days. Designated staff members are following doctor's orders for treatment protocols and following CDC infection prevention protocols.

The first employee last worked Tuesday, November 17, in assisted living. The second employee, who last worked November 18, tested positive with a rapid point-of-care test Wednesday evening. Later in the day, the employee began to feel unwell and was administered a POC test.

The third employee sought testing after beginning to experience signs or symptoms of COVID-19. The employee also last worked November 18. The fourth employee is a non-direct resident care employee who last worked November 19.

All four employees tested negative in surveillance testing on November 16. They each passed their pre-shift screenings and wore personal protective equipment as required.

We follow CDC and KDHE guidelines in determining when an employee may return to work. Under the current guidelines, the employee may return to work when at least 72 hours have passed since resolution of the employee's fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and the employee's symptoms have improved and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. If asymptomatic, the employee must quarantine for 14 days before returning to work. Upon the

employee's return to work, we will follow CDC recommendations related to work practices and restrictions.

These cases bring our total new cases since November 14 to five employee and eight residents. Due to the number of cases involved, Newton Presbyterian Manor is considered a COVID-19 cluster. A cluster is defined as two or more non-household cases of COVID-19 associated with a location during a specific period of time.

The Harvey County Health Department has been notified. Assisted living residents and employees will be tested Monday. Health care residents and employees also will test later in the week. We will follow any additional guidance the health department provides.

In-person visitation, group activities and communal dining remain on pause at the campus. Families are encouraged to schedule window and virtual visits with their loved ones during this time.

All employees and residents are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines and best practices as these are continually updated. The community regularly reinforces with all staff that an employee should not report to work if he or she is experiencing symptoms of a respiratory illness or not feeling well.

For more information about Newton Presbyterian Manor's response, go to PMMA's (Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America's) website, Presbyterianmanors.org/Media-room.

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