



News Release

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Residents, staff test positive for COVID-19, 5 residents pass at Arkansas City Presbyterian Manor

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. – Eleven new cases of COVID-19 were identified through COVID-19 testing this week at Arkansas City Presbyterian Manor, and five residents who tested positive for COVID-19 have died.

“We continue to be deeply saddened by the deaths of our residents. These residents’ families are in our thoughts and prayers,” said Sarah Griggs, executive director.

The residents had been cared for in an area designated for COVID-positive residents and cared for by designated staff following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) infection prevention protocols and physician’s orders.

Two essential health care workers, one non-direct resident care employee and one health care resident tested positive with rapid point-of-care (POC) testing over the weekend. All three employees passed pre-shift screening and wore personal protective equipment as required. All three also tested negative for COVID-19 during surveillance testing November 18.

The community conducted 93 tests Monday, November 23, for employees, health care residents and assisted living residents and home health participants. Four health care residents tested positive for COVID-19, and 3 employees tested positive for the virus. Results were received late in the day November 24. The assisted living residents and home health participants all tested negative for COVID-19. In the second round of employee surveillance testing on November 24, 84 employees were tested. One employee, who tested negative in both rounds of surveillance testing, was re-tested after starting to experience signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and tested positive on Tuesday.

The COVID-positive residents were placed in isolation to be cared for by designated employees according to CDC infection control and prevention protocols and physician’s orders.

We will follow CDC and KDHE guidelines for when residents may come out of isolation. Under the current guidelines, symptomatic residents may come out of 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. If asymptomatic, the resident will remain in isolation for 14 days.

Three of the new COVID-positive employees are essential health care workers and one is a non-direct resident care employee. All four tested negative in surveillance testing November 16 and November 18. All four passed pre-shift screening and wore personal protective equipment as required. The employees last worked November 23 and November 24.

The Cowley County Health Department has been notified, and the senior living community will follow any additional direction provided. The next round of testing for employees, health care and assisted living residents and home health participants will be Monday, November 30. Employee surveillance testing will continue as required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Our community received some good news this week at the end of a focused infection control survey that reviews our practices for infection prevention and our response to this pandemic. We received word today that the surveyors found no deficiencies.

CMS mandated surveillance testing of staff, including all employees, agency employees, volunteers, hospice, lab and therapy providers on a frequency determined by our county's COVID-19 testing positivity rate. Based on our county positivity rate for COVID-19 tests, our campus is testing staff twice a week.

The employees who tested positive will remain in isolation until cleared to work by the health department. We follow CDC and KDHE guidelines for when an employee may return to work. Under the current guidelines, symptomatic employees 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. Asymptomatic positive employees will quarantine for 14 days. Upon the employee's return to work, we will follow CDC recommendations related to work practices and restrictions.

All team members 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 individual should not report to work if he or she is experiencing symptoms of a respiratory illness or not feeling well.

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

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