Wichita Presbyterian Manor reports tough week for COVID-19 test results at community

WICHITA, Kan. – Wichita Presbyterian Manor identified 22 new cases of COVID-19 at the campus since December 24 as the community experienced its worst outbreak of the pandemic.

Seventeen new cases were identified among residents since Christmas Eve – 13 in memory care, three in assisted living and one in health care. The residents have been placed in COVID-19 isolation and are being cared for according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) infection control and prevention protocols and physician’s orders.

We follow CDC and KDHE guidelines for when the 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 residents will remain in isolation for at least 10 days.

Four essential health care workers and one non-direct resident care employee also tested positive this week at the campus. One essential health care employee was tested by rapid point-of-care test on Monday after exhibiting signs and symptoms of the virus, and the others were identified through two rounds of employee surveillance testing conducted Monday and Tuesday at the campus.

The employees are quarantining at home and will not be allowed to work until they meet 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 at least 10 days. Upon the employee’s return to work, we will follow CDC recommendations related to work practices and restrictions.

Our focus remains on ensuring the well-being of our residents and employees. We continue to follow all guidance related to patient care, employee safety, and efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, as provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are working closely with Jeanne Gerstenkorn, PMMA’s infection preventionist and vice president for health and wellness, in implementing our Emergent Infectious Disease (EID) Outbreak Management Plan.

The Sedgwick County Health Department and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Epidemiology Hotline have been notified. We will test residents in health care, PATH, memory care and assisted living and all employees Monday, January 4.
We also will continue regular surveillance testing of employees. Based on our county positivity rate for COVID-19 tests, our campus is testing employees twice a week.

All residents and employees 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.

As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, it should play an instrumental role in eventually moving toward resuming our normal operations. Every person who receives the vaccine will strengthen the protection for all residents, staff and the community at-large. PMMA strongly encourages our families, employees and residents to carefully consider obtaining a vaccine for themselves as well as their loved ones.

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