



September 24, 2020

TO OUR RESIDENTS, RESIDENT CONTACTS, TEAM MEMBERS, BOARD MEMBERS & PHYSICIANS:

As we communicated last Friday, Governor Abbott and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (“HHSC”) announced a preliminary revision of policies regarding visitation for eligible nursing, assisted living, and intermediate care facilities, home and community-based service providers, and inpatient hospice. The announcement indicated this new phase of visitation was to be effective Thursday, September 24th. The policy announcement was very broad with no specific guidance or directives for care providers regarding the implementation of these new policies. Also, there was not any information relating to when the final visitation rules would be distributed.

Industry providers and LeadingAge Texas have been asking HHSC for clarification and direction in anticipation of today’s effective date. The draft information we’ve received thus far, 29 pages, requires further analysis and assessment by our team. In addition, we are waiting for Dallas County to revise their current orders to potentially reflect the changes from HHSC.

All organizations must first submit an application to HHSC and subsequently be approved as eligible prior to allowing visitations on our campuses. Another significant requirement is that conditions for visitations are based on percentage of county positivity rate. If a facility is located in a county with a positivity rate of greater than 10%, visitations are limited to outdoor visits, closed window visits, end-of-life visits, and essential caregiver visits – and must not include indoor “plexiglass” visits.

The past six months of ever-changing COVID-19 protocols have been a challenge for healthcare providers nationwide. Now, more than ever, we appreciate the importance of families, socialization, physical contact, and faith to sustain us and contribute to our resident and team well-being. That said, there is a fine line between adapting our protocols safely while also adhering to public health policy. Please know that we will continue to hold resident and team safety as our highest priority in making the difficult decisions on policy and protocol as it relates to visitations. We will be conservative in our approach with the goal of preventing a COVID-19 outbreak on campus.

We hope to receive clarification and guidance on these new directives in the coming weeks. As soon as we know more and can evaluate our protocols, we will let you know. We will continue to follow directives from the Centers for Disease Control, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (“CMS”), HHSC and the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services.

Thank you so much for your continued support. We are in this together and need your understanding and encouragement.

Russell Crews
President and CEO