

**ALL STAFF/FAMILIES/RESIDENT ALERT:**

We are excited to announce that we have no new positive cases at BLHCC in the last 2 weeks. This means we are moving out of outbreak testing for residents and staff. We will continue to test staff per our county positivity rates but will not need to test residents unless they are showing symptoms or we discover a positive case. This week our county positivity rate is at the lowest level in a very long time at 1.5%. The counties around us remain at 5% or greater. Our facility has decided to follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health and CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and move to monthly testing for staff. Our next planned testing day will be February 22, 2021.

We know that for some this testing frequency may not seem like enough. We will continue to test any symptomatic persons using our rapid testing process and monitor the county positivity rates to determine if we need to increase testing frequency. We are concerned about the new strains of COVID that have now entered Minnesota and are predicted to be easier to spread. We are happy to hear that the vaccine is also working against the new strains. COVID will be something as a society we will be dealing with for a long time yet, and future waves of outbreaks are predicted. Our only defense is to vaccinate as many as possible as quickly as possible. We highly encourage everyone to get vaccinated as they are able. This vaccination process will take time and we need to continue be very cautious with our community activity.

With that being said we are welcoming back indoor visits on a **scheduled basis**. You can sign up for an indoor visit on our website at [www.blhcc.org](http://www.blhcc.org) or contact the activity department at 320-833-5364 ext 36 for assistance. These visits are for anyone, you do not have to be family to visit someone at our facility. When you arrive for a visit come in through our **new main entrance on Yellowstone Trail**. You should arrive no more than 5 minutes before *your assigned time* and you will be screened prior to your visit. You will need to wear a proper mask and must maintain social distancing for the visit. The visit will then take place in our new community room with indirect supervision to ensure proper mask wearing and social distancing. Thank you for complying with the requirements to make these visits possible for our residents!

We are preparing for our next COVID-19 vaccine clinic on February 10<sup>th</sup>. You will be notified of what time to come that day for your vaccine. This will be the second shot in the series for many of our staff and residents. Any staff or residents that have not started the series are welcomed to do so on Feb 10<sup>th</sup>. Staff, ***it is essential that we know by February 1<sup>st</sup>*** if you planning to start the vaccination process. At this time you will not be able begin the vaccine series on March 10<sup>th</sup>, this date will only be for those needing the second shot. Please let Kendra, Michelle or Shyann know if you plan to receive the vaccine and fill out the consent form as soon as possible.

The end is at last in sight, but we will all need to work together to get there. Our society as a whole needs everyone possible to receive this vaccine and achieve herd immunity to return to any kind of “normal”.

Sincerely,

Mark Rust Administrator

Kendra Hiles Director of Nursing