

October 30, 2020

Dear Charles River Community,

I am writing to inform you about the status of our surveillance testing and positive tests for COVID-19.

As you will recall from my previous messages, we have been engaged in surveillance testing of staff and vendors, who work within our residential programs since August 1<sup>st</sup>. We test all staff at least monthly and more frequently as needed. Until this past weekend, there were no positive test results of the over 500 tests conducted.

Unfortunately, as of last Friday, we have 18 new positive cases (10 staff and 8 residents). Some people were and continue to be asymptomatic, which was the point of doing surveillance testing. However, some are feeling the effects of the coronavirus. We have also heard of family members who have tested positive. Most significantly, one resident who had COVID-19 in April, who was thought to have some level of immunity, has again contracted COVID-19 just 6 months later. This is something we all must seriously consider and understand that we still know so little about COVID-19 regarding immunity.

Currently, we are allowing indoor visitations and allowing people to go home for visits, except in quarantine or extremely high-risk residential homes. This policy may need to change if the numbers of positive cases continue to rise. At present, four of our residential homes are quarantined and will not be permitting visitation of any kind. This includes indoor, outdoor, or residents leaving and returning to the programs from a home visit. This precautionary measure is necessary to attempt to stop the spread of the virus. Please understand that our decisions about visitations not only impact you and your family members, but also the health and well-being of the staff, those with whom they reside, and their visitors.

We continue to follow the guidance of the local Boards of Health and the Department of Public Health in contract tracing. Our residential management and nursing staff have communicated with all staff and families of residents who may have been exposed to those who have tested positive.

It is particularly concerning how quickly positive cases have risen around the state through community spread as the state re-opened. It is now impacting our community at an alarming rate. For the residences not under quarantine, we strongly urge families and guardians to curtail their visits as much as possible. This is the highest one-week rate of transmission that Charles River has seen since the start of the pandemic, which is very sobering. If visitations must occur, we encourage outdoor visitation, weather permitting.

For those of you who have family members attending the day programs, there has been no exposure to the coronavirus in the day programs. Last Monday, we closed the day programs because test results were still pending in a few of the residential programs and we did not want to operate the day program with even the slightest possible of exposure. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution we closed the day programs for one day. Through contract tracing, we have subsequently concluded that there has not been any exposure to the day program by staff or persons served.

As always, we will remain open and transparent in our communication as we work together to control this current surge in COVID-19. We urge your cooperation for the health and safety of everyone.

Stay safe,

Anne-Marie Bajwa  
President and CEO