Barb's Daily Memo to Residents: **19 March 2020**

Dear Residents

These are questions I was asked yesterday (among others☺) and some additional information I hope you find helpful. Informative at the very least.

1.How are we identifying those who may have flu, COVID-19?

We are screening all residents, staff and contractors at our gates for flu-like symptoms or history of recent travel to affected areas.

We are also asking those screening questions when a resident contacts the Front Desk or Wellness Center to report symptoms consistent with respiratory illness, or if they ask to see a nurse.

2.What happens if a resident or staff member has symptoms consistent with flu, COVID-19?

If a resident, or staff member, answers yes to any of the screening questions or has a fever, they will have additional assessment done. Staff with symptoms consistent with flu, will be directed to quarantine at home for 14 days. If they are free of symptoms at 14 days, they may return to work. If their condition worsens, they should contact their physician or emergency services as needed.

Residents with symptoms will be also directed to quarantine at home for 14 days until clear of symptoms. They will also be advised to contact their Primary Care Provider(PCP) for further directions. Their PCP will direct any further testing if it is deemed appropriate. If a resident' condition worsens, they should contact their PCP, Wellness Center or Front Desk for assistance or EMS directly if symptoms are severe.

3. Can I or should I get tested for COVID-19?

Routine testing is not available, advised or necessary. If your symptoms warrant any testing, your physician may determine that a flu-test is advisable. It is recommended that if symptoms are consistent with flu, a seasonal flu test be administered first. This could change if testing becomes widely available for COVID-19.

At Falcons Landing, we can test for seasonal flu, but do not have the test for COVID-19. If the flu test is positive, we would report it to Virginia Department of Health, who would guide us on any further testing. If flu test is negative, but symptoms are highly suspicious for COVID-19, we will also refer to VDH. Otherwise, treatment would be based on symptoms. If warranted, your physician might order other tests to identify the cause of the symptoms.

Availability of COVID-19 testing

COVID-19 testing is currently only available through Virginia's public health lab, Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS), and only for the people who meet the priority testing, outlined below:

a. Person who had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of onset AND fever or signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness;

b. Person with travel to a country with a Level 2 or 3 Travel Advisory or an area with confirmed ongoing community transmission within 14 days of onset AND has fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness AND tested negative for influenza on initial work-up (rapid or confirmatory);

c. Person who resides in a nursing home or long-term care facility AND who has fever or signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness AND who tested negative for influenza on initial work-up (rapid or confirmatory) AND a respiratory virus panel negative for all pathogens AND no alternative diagnosis

VDH approval IS needed for testing at DCLS. Your healthcare provider will work with your local health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If indicated, they will provide you with information regarding next steps for testing

4. **If a test for COVID-19 is positive, what treatment is available?**

For now, there is no specific treatment for COVID-19. Treatment for either seasonal flu or COVID-19 is supportive and based on your symptoms. For those who are on home quarantine, standard over-the-counter medications are recommended for fever, cough or muscle aches. For those who develop shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or other symptoms of acute illness, hospitalization

may be required. Treatment will be to alleviate symptoms and treat complications.

At this time, no anti-viral medications have been developed that are effective in decreasing the duration or severity of COVID-19 symptoms. The antivirals used for seasonal flu have not proven effective. COVID-19 vaccine development is ongoing, but it is not yet known when it might be approved or widely available. There are some studies underway on the potential value of administering certain medications to patients with COVID-19; some show promise and have been approved for limited use in severe cases. We are following the news and awaiting guidance.

Sincerely,

Barb