

# CORONAVIRUS ESSENTIAL CAREGIVER – RESIDENT AND FAMILY LETTER –

*July 22, 2020*

To the People We Serve at Crest View Senior Communities

Although social distancing and physical separation are still important to keep residents safe, we are taking steps to combat the unintended consequences of prolonged social isolation and to maintain overall health and wellbeing.

We are pleased to announce that we are creating a new program called Essential Caregiver - – in accordance with guidelines released from Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) last Friday. Our goal through this program is to help our residents who are missing care previously provided by a loved one or outside caregiver prior to the visitor restrictions required by state and federal guidelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**This new program will be implemented effective Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>** per MDH guidelines and is a narrowly defined exception to visitor restrictions which may allow certain cares to be provided by a personal caregiver from outside our community.

We ask for patience over the next few weeks as we design a program that balances the safety, health and wellness for all who live and work here and for those who serve in the Essential Caregiver role. We recognize the critical role family members and other outside caregivers, such as friends, volunteers, private personal caregivers, often have in the care and support of residents

We are providing some information to you in advance of this program starting so you have a better understanding of what it means to be an Essential Caregiver as well as the policies and protocols that will be in place for those who serve in this role.

We encourage you to [read the MDH guidance on Essential Caregivers](#) to fully understand the guidance we are required to follow by the State of Minnesota and ensure we are protecting the health and safety of all who live and work here. Below are some of the criteria we will use as we evaluate and designate Essential Caregivers in our settings:

- Essential Caregivers will be determined based on consultation/assessment with our clinical leadership team.
- All Essential Caregiver visits **MUST BE SCHEDULED** in advance, per facility protocols.
- Residents will be consulted about their wishes to help determine whom to designate as an Essential Caregiver. If the resident desires to designate more than one Essential Caregiver based on their past involvement and needs, we will work cooperatively with them to determine who will serve as essential caregivers and the schedule for those visits.
- Essential Caregivers can be family members, outside caregivers, friends or volunteers who provided regular care and emotional support to the resident prior to the pandemic.
- Essential Caregivers may provide support up to one hour per day. Please know Crest View Senior Communities may establish limits of the number of Essential Caregivers in the building or the length of the visits based on the need to keep residents and staff safe.

- Essential Caregivers will be actively screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the building and must wear all necessary personal protective equipment while in the building. They must also perform frequent hand hygiene and maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet with staff and other residents while in our building.
- Essential Caregivers will limit their movement in our building, providing care and support in their loved ones' room/apartment or a pre-determined space in our building.
- Essential Caregivers must inform us if they develop a fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of a visit to a resident.

With this new guidance, it is important to know that Essential Caregivers cannot take a resident out into the community except for essential medical appointments and must not visit a resident during a resident's 14-day quarantine and must not visit when a resident is positive for COVID-19 or symptomatic, unless the visit is for compassionate care. Please know we do retain the right to restrict or revoke Essential Care status if the designated person fails to follow our established policies and protocols.

Realizing both the potential benefits and risks of allowing additional essential caregivers into the building, we will carefully consider the current status of COVID-19 in our setting and local communities prior to designating Essential Caregivers and as we monitor the program.

If you or your loved one are interested in the Essential Caregiver designation, please contact the main office number for your respective campus (763-762-8420 for the Blaine Campus OR 763-782-1611 for the Columbia Heights Campus). We will review each request to determine whether it meets the criteria of the state and meetings the resident's care plan before any individual can begin serving as an Essential Caregiver.

We know that you share our concerns about efforts to keep residents in our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we welcome this opportunity to make necessary exceptions to the visitor restrictions, we must all continue to be vigilant. If, at any time, it is deemed unsafe for Essential Caregivers to enter the building—due to a rise in the number of cases in our community, either within our walls or in the broader community—it is our obligation per MDH guidelines to revisit and reassess the program.

We recognize the concern you may have that not everyone will be able to serve as an Essential Family Caregiver. We also deeply feel the desire of our residents and their loved ones to be connected in a more meaningful way.

At this time, indoor visits in our settings are still not allowed per the Minnesota Department of Health. Please know we continue to provide outdoor visits window visits, and visits through technology and encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. We are working on plan to re-open our setting to visitation once we receive updated guidance from the state and meet the requirements that will be specified in that guidance. We will keep you updated on the status of our re-opening and look forward to the day when we can warmly welcome all visitors back into our community.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Organization