



**Parker Jewish Institute**  
HEALTH CARE AND REHABILITATION

## **COVID-19 Updates from Parker Jewish Institute**

**Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

### **About Parker Jewish Institute**

Parker is one of the nation's oldest and most recognized adult health care and rehabilitation facilities, has earned the Center for Medicare & Medicaid's coveted Five Star Quality Rating. More than being just a top rated 527-bed care facility, Parker is also a leading academic campus for the training of health care professionals, and an important research center for studies related to aging. Perhaps most important, Parker is a not-for-profit, 100% mission-driven organization where any surpluses are reinvested in better serving our Parker resident family.

### **How Parker is meeting or exceeding Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines**

For over a century nothing has ever been more important to us than the health and love of our residents and staff. Below are just a few of the ways we are demonstrating our mission to be a leader in protecting, caring and advocating for the people that have placed their trust in us.

Parker Jewish Institute first began monitoring global reports of coronavirus in January, and we have taken every available measure to combat COVID-19 personally, building on the extensive training they already receive at regular intervals during the year.

- Ahead of the issuance of federal guidelines by the U.S. Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services, on Thursday, March 12, 2020, Parker closed its facility to all non-essential visitors.
- Housekeeping and disinfection schedules were intensified and strict handwashing, hygiene and infection control protocols have been enforced and closely monitored.
- Testing of patients and residents has been on-going to mitigate exposure and infection spread.
- All staff are screened daily and closely monitored for possible exposure or illness in accordance with infection control best practices and state and federal guidelines.
- Dramatically increased expenditures for purchasing additional PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) as needed and required to ensure that all team members in facility and community based services have appropriate PPE.
- Our clinicians are constantly circulating throughout the facility 24-hours-a-day to observe staff and residents, ensure that all housekeeping, hygiene and infection control measures are being properly carried out and respond to questions from residents and staff.
- A dedicated phone line is staffed by trained personnel to fulfill family members requests for updates on a loved one by a member of the clinical or medical team, or simply coordination of FaceTime and phone calls.

## Making sense of Media Reports

It is widely known that nursing homes have been ground zero of the attack by the novel coronavirus, and naturally media has and should report on the infections and deaths that are occurring. Unfortunately, in the course of such reporting, some articles have included wildly inaccurate and unsubstantiated allegations of worker conditions at Parker. As is the nature of media reporting, these inaccurate reports have been referenced in other stories, creating an echo chamber of misinformation.

To correct the record on some of the most important false reporting, we want you to know that:

- At no time ever were our staff instructed or expected to wear garbage bags as gown replacements. Parker has expended enormous effort and spared no expense to secure Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for our staff, often at grossly inflated prices, and we continue to regularly secure and issue all necessary and available PPE for nursing homes.
- If at any time staff feels that their safety is at risk due to a lack of PPE, we welcome and expect to hear either directly from them or their union delegates.
- We know that our Parker Jewish Institute clinicians and support staff are genuine heroes on the frontlines of this battle against this pandemic, and they report for duty daily, without complaint, giving everything they have to care for our residents with courage and compassion. Consequently, we strictly follow all regulatory guidelines, both state and federal, for the protection of our greatest asset, our staff.
- We know how vital it is during this time of forced isolation to be able to stay in contact with loved ones. In response, Parker implemented a new family call center call-line that not only allows family members to stay in touch with our residents, but also to receive accurate and timely updates on their status. Parker's clinical team makes personal calls to family members to share information on the status of residents and developments in the facilities.
- Additionally, the Parker staff provides technological coaching so that residents can FaceTime their families with iPads provided by Parker.

## New Guidance

As you may have read, within the last few days there has been new State and federal guidance mandating that skilled nursing facilities implement certain COVID-19 related measures. Please be assured that Parker was effectively complying with these mandates *even before they were issued*. Specifically:

- **Testing and Reporting** – Parker exceeds CDC guidance by being at the forefront of laboratory testing for COVID-19, having initiated testing in mid-March at the beginning of this crisis. Consequently, we have been able to accurately track and report our data to the New York State Department of Health, and have been able to provide state authorities a more full and accurate report than other facilities.
- **Infection Prevention** – Parker is already meeting CDC's newly issued guidance to establish and maintain an infection prevention and control program designed to provide a safe, sanitary, and comfortable environment and to help prevent the development and transmission of communicable diseases and infections.
- **Surveillance** – Parker implemented a surveillance system when we initiated our testing regimen. This

helps us identify possible infections (and other communicable diseases) before they can spread within our facility.

- **Facility Reporting** – From the outset of this pandemic, Parker has reported our severe respiratory infections or deaths to the state health department, and will immediately comply with also reporting this information to CDC in the format and frequency required in its soon to be issued guidance for nursing homes.

The Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation will continue with its mission, each and every day.

Thank you,

The Parker Community