

December 16, 2021

Dear Lorien Residents and Families,

Christmas-time and the upcoming New Year brings messages of optimism, love, and peace. As we turn the page on our pandemic-filled 2021, it is my sincere hope that the joyous feelings of this season fill our year ahead.

As our holiday celebrations carry on during the next couple of weeks, there are a few important matters I wish to share with you.

Earlier this month, Governor Hogan announced the first cases of the Omicron variant in Maryland. Both the federal and the state governments are working with international partners to learn more about Omicron, including how transmissible it is and its severity. As a reminder, the COVID-19 vaccine booster is available in our buildings and we encourage you to schedule an appointment if you are due for your shot. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or to your Administrator

As you may have already heard, the Maryland Department of Health's (MDH) COVID dashboard has recently experienced a cybersecurity breach. This means that MDH has not been able to provide an accurate number of COVID positive cases or transmission rates for nearly two weeks. What we do know is that eight (8) Lorien facilities are currently on outbreak status.

**The MDH has recommended that out of an abundance of caution, our facilities should operate as if all the counties have a "substantial to high transmission rate" until the data on the dashboard has been updated.** Therefore, we've implemented the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) visitation guidance for facilities in counties with substantial and high transmission rates. **Accordingly, visitors should wear a mask, perform proper hand hygiene, and will still be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry.** Please also go directly to the visitation area or to your loved one's room to avoid any unnecessary interaction. If it becomes necessary, this will help us contact trace quickly and thoroughly.

We anticipate a high volume of visitors this Christmas season. At the same time, Maryland has seen a serious uptick in positive Covid-19 cases, with 173 out of approximately 245 nursing homes on outbreak status. Therefore, we request that you avoid visitation if you are experiencing any Covid-19, cold, or flu symptoms or if you have recently been exposed to Covid-19. We cannot stress enough the importance of this as everyone, including you, are at risk.

My family has had long-standing traditions for the holidays that we look forward to. Celebrating the *Feast of Seven Fishes* is just one example that I have fond memories of. Many of our Lorien families also traditionally like to bring poinsettias when visiting during Christmas. In the spirit of honoring some of these traditions, we now welcome you to bring potted plants and flowers.

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Although we've had routines and traditions disrupted in 2021, I'm so grateful that together, you and all of us at Lorien continue to navigate through these times together. I'm hopeful that we will all learn to live in this "new normal" and am genuinely optimistic about our year ahead!

Sincerely wishing you love and peace this holiday season and always,



Lou Grimmel