

December 29, 2021

Dear Lorien Residents and Families,

As we approach the New Year, I've been hoping that I would be able to deliver some more positive news regarding COVID-19 to you. Unfortunately, a recent *New York Times* headline aptly states the dire situation we currently find ourselves in: *"The U.S. is averaging 267,000 daily coronavirus cases, a record as two highly contagious variants converge and threaten to overwhelm hospitals"*.

In Maryland just this week, we have seen staggering numbers. So far, today marks the highest numbers recorded with a total of 10,973 new positive cases, over 2000 hospitalizations, and a 19.31% testing positivity rate. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) reported that these numbers are still a result of the Christmas holiday and that countless test results are still backlogged for days. Since there is a major delay in receiving results, we anticipate that the number of positive cases will continue to increase significantly.

Also, this week, several hospitals in Maryland including UMMS Upper Chesapeake, have declared COVID – 19 related "hospital disasters" as a result of a significant jump in the number of hospitalizations and a worsening staffing crisis which now requires these hospitals to utilize unconventional staffing models. In addition, these hospitals have implemented slimmed down documentation policies in an effort to minimize staff workloads and better enable them to care for patients.

**Unfortunately, Lorien is in a similar situation and I believe the worst is yet to come.** As it now stands, all of our buildings are on outbreak status and are located in counties that have substantial transmission rates. Our facilities are also at crisis staffing ratios and those team members who are still working, are working tirelessly and with many, many overtime hours. **Therefore, I'm asking, once again, for all of us to help each other. In an effort to keep our residents and employees safe, I ask that you take a different approach to visitation while we ride this next wave together.**

Through contact tracing in several of our Lorien facilities, we have discovered that many of our residents who are currently COVID positive have, indeed, contracted this virus through visitation with friends or family members. **Because of this, we strongly encourage that ONLY virtual visits be scheduled at this time.** Additionally, as many schools continue to close and move to virtual classes in the new year, **we highly discourage any school age children from visiting in person.**

**If you must visit, it is essential that you wear your mask at all times throughout the facility, especially in the resident's room.** Please also practice proper hand hygiene and social distancing, and go directly to the resident's visitation area or room. **Please do not visit if you are experiencing symptoms of any kind.** The CDC has a list of symptoms which you can find here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> . Finally, if you have visited recently, and display symptoms after your visit, please contact your facility immediately.

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We have weathered this turbulent storm in years past and I believe that with our coordinated efforts, we can successfully navigate this one as well. Have a safe and hopeful New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lou Grimmel'.

Lou Grimmel, CEO

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