

**Milwaukee Respiratory Illness Rising**

For the past few weeks, the incidence rate of various respiratory illnesses (influenza, RSV, and COVID) have been steadily increasing in the broader community. **We've experienced a similar trend within our campus and would strongly encourage everyone to take seasonal precautions to prevent the spread of all illnesses.** Face masking and frequent handwashing are effective techniques to protect yourself.

As a reminder, if you are not feeling well – stay home! Contact the staff in the Wellness Center (414-831-6876) and they can arrange testing for the various respiratory illnesses, including COVID.

**Current COVID cases**

We have experienced two recent outbreaks in the Care Neighborhoods, both causing temporary quarantines of the affected Neighborhood:

- Seven residents of Canterbury tested positive for COVID between December 1 and December 8, causing Canterbury to remain in a modified quarantine until December 21. All residents have recovered.
- Three residents of Windsor tested positive for COVID. The first was December 15, the second December 19 the third December 21. Windsor will be in a modified quarantine until December 31. All residents are asymptomatic.

When more than one person in a Care Neighborhood tests positive, we transition the entire Neighborhood to in-room dining and discontinue group activities. It's a difficult sacrifice but has proven effective at limiting disease transmission. We also regularly test all other residents of the same Neighborhood – so rest assured those residents you might see around campus have been tested, are negative and without symptoms, and are safe.

There are eight Towers residents who are currently positive for COVID. All are doing well, isolating in their apartments. Additionally, there are two COVID-positive employees. Both are recovering at home.

We believe numbers like these might be the “new normal” during what has been traditionally called Cold and Flu Season. In a post-pandemic world, we have simply elevated our awareness, precautions, and response.

**Face Masking Guidelines**

No recent changes to our guidelines. We no longer require face masks for residents, visitors, or employees throughout the Towers, including the Town Center. Face masks are still required for employees and visitors in the Care Neighborhoods (Windsor, Stratford, and Canterbury).

**We will continue, for the foreseeable future, to be a mask-optional community.** I would ask all residents and employees to recognize and respect every person's decision to wear a mask, or to not.

**Questions?**

The COVID Updates are produced by Saint John's COVID Response Team. If you have a question for the team, please contact Matt Loyd, COO, at (414) 831 – 6953 or [mloyd@saintjohnsmilw.org](mailto:mloyd@saintjohnsmilw.org).