

March 26, 2021

TO: Residents and Family Members

FROM: Loriman Looke, Executive Director and Administrator

With this monthly update, I'm happy to report that the last couple of weeks have brought hints of an easing of restrictions within the Anderson Inn. Due to changing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Maine Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), in addition to the previously announced resumption of certain resident activities, other items that are now permitted include:

- Effective immediately, Inn residents who have been fully vaccinated (14 days past their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or 14 days past their single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) can now leave the building for, say, a doctor's appointment or an outing with a friend or relative. Upon returning to the Inn, the resident will not be required to quarantine, so long as they have not had prolonged close contact with someone known or suspected with COVID-19 in the last 14 days. It is highly recommended that masking and social distancing be maintained at all times, and appropriate hand hygiene is always a must.
- Inn residents may now visit with friends who live in other parts of the building. They can enjoy a masked, socially-distanced outdoor visit with a resident from another part of the building. Or, they can arrange to have an indoor visit in either resident's part of the Inn, but they will need to meet in one of the established visiting spaces inside the Inn, adhere to certain safety guidelines and schedule the visit in advance. For more information about the ground rules for indoor visitation and how to make an appointment, please contact: health services coordinator Nina Cunningham, 207-301-6224, for independent living residents; the charge nurse, 207-301-6282, for Terraces and Courtyard residents; or the Gardens activity staff, 207-301-6131, for Gardens residents.

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In addition, there is good news regarding admissions to the Inn:

- Effective immediately, new residents no longer have to undergo quarantine after they move in, provided they are fully vaccinated and have not had prolonged close contact with someone known or suspected to have had COVID-19 in the last 14 days. (Those who do not meet these criteria must still undergo quarantine; and all new arrivals, regardless of vaccination status, must still show proof of a negative COVID test result administered no more than 72 hours before move-in.)
- Quarry Hill's dementia-care community, the Courtyard—which has been closed to admissions since last March due to COVID—can now, per the CDC, welcome new residents from outside our community, so long as they have been fully vaccinated and have not had a known exposure.

I'd also like to address the question that many of you have been asking with regard to Quarry Hill's COVID-related safeguards and procedures. That is, now that the CDC has issued nationwide guidelines allowing for the relaxation of some of the most onerous restrictions that Americans have endured, why aren't we seeing the same easing of restrictions at Quarry Hill?

The question is certainly understandable. It's frustrating to see hints of a return to normalcy all around us, but not to the same degree at Quarry Hill. Plus, it's been a full year since we initiated strict protective measures (March 13 was the not-so-happy one-year anniversary of the closing of the Anderson Inn's doors to non-residents, in case you're wondering), and exhaustion has taken hold.

It's important to recognize that the CDC's guidelines for the general public and the guidelines for senior-care communities like Quarry Hill (i.e., those where there's a main building that includes long-term nursing care along with other levels of care) are different. Also, Quarry Hill is regulated by CMS and the Maine DHHS, so we must follow their guidance, which at times may differ from that of the CDC.

Public-health experts remain reluctant to sanction the relaxation of most of the protective measures in place at communities like ours, citing the particular vulnerability of the residents of such communities to the virus, as well as the potential spread of worrisome new variants and other concerns. So when we hear about restrictions easing around town or around Maine or even at retirement communities that appear similar to Quarry Hill on the surface but that don't offer nursing care, we shouldn't rush to compare what's permissible *there* to what's permissible *here*.

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Finally, as you, our residents and family members, make plans for the warmer months ahead, it might please you to know that Maine Governor Janet Mills has expanded the list of states whose citizens are exempt from testing and quarantining requirements when entering Maine. Now, people from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, as well as New Hampshire and Vermont, are exempt from these requirements. People traveling into Maine from any state who have been fully vaccinated, and those who have recently had COVID, are also exempt from these requirements. Bear in mind, however, that federal requirements related to international travelers remain in effect.

Please remember that all of these policy easings are subject to change at any time, should there be a positive case at the Anderson Inn or our county's transmission rate rises to concerning levels. For now, though, I hope we can all draw comfort from the recent developments, celebrate the spring thaw as reflected not only on our thermometers but in our day-to-day lives, and look forward optimistically to still-better times ahead.

Lastly, I'm also delighted to share with you the results of the latest round of routine surveillance testing of employees, conducted March 23 and March 24. All test results were negative for COVID-19.