



At home in Camden

August 23, 2021

TO: Residents and Family Members

FROM: Loriman Looke, Executive Director and Administrator

In recent weeks there has been much discussion about the mandating of COVID-19 vaccinations for those working in healthcare. As of October 1, 2021, COVID-19 vaccinations will be a requirement of employment for our care team members at Quarry Hill, whether employed or contracted.

- On August 3, MaineHealth, which includes Quarry Hill, announced that it will join dozens of hospitals and health systems, along with some government and non-healthcare private employers, in making COVID-19 vaccination a requirement for employment, stating that it would give consideration to requests for medical and religious exemptions.
- Just nine days later, Governor Mills declared that her administration will require all healthcare workers—in hospitals, long-term-care and multilevel facilities, EMS and dentist offices, to name a few—to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with the only possibility for exemption being medical.
- Then, on August 19, the Biden Administration announced that it will require nursing homes to mandate staff vaccination in order to continue receiving Medicare and Medicaid funding. Because the state's requirements outrank MaineHealth's, the only possible reason for one of our care team members not to be vaccinated after October 1 will be due to a medical exemption, unless, of course, the federal government states otherwise.

The COVID-19 vaccines are proving to be safe, effective and our best path to ending the pandemic.

The vaccination mandate is consistent with MaineHealth's values and its vision *of working together so our communities are the healthiest in America*. Adopting this practice is part of our continued commitment to keeping Quarry Hill's residents, patients and care team members safe.

Last week, U.S. health officials announced plans to dispense a third dose of COVID-19, also known as

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a booster shot, to Americans to shore up their protection in view of the surging Delta variant and signs that the vaccines' effectiveness is waning. As we have throughout this pandemic, Quarry Hill will rely on the expertise of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the guidance from our two regulatory bodies, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Maine Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), on this matter and will communicate accordingly.

The Delta variant has already infiltrated Maine this summer and has led to a steep increase in positivity rates in Knox County and much of the rest of the state. While regulations and guidance from CMS and Maine DHHS have not changed, they may at any time.

Given the increase in positivity rates in Knox County, I would like to stress the following regarding masking:

- Masking is required in the common areas of Anderson Inn. Upon entering the Inn, please sanitize hands (dispensers are located in the Main Lobby and throughout the building) and don a fresh mask, as part of our screening efforts. This practice applies to everyone: residents, patients, visitors, contractors and care team members.
- Although current guidance does allow residents to remove their masks when participating in group activities where everyone in attendance is fully vaccinated, we recommend that you wear a mask at all times whenever you're participating in an indoor group activity.
- Likewise, we suggest that residents and their guests, when visiting behind closed doors within the Inn, remain masked, even if everyone in attendance is fully vaccinated.

This tiered approach—vaccination, masking, distancing and hand hygiene—continues to be the best way to avoid bringing COVID-19 into the Anderson Inn and unwittingly transmitting it to others.

You are welcome to reach out to me with specific questions or concerns by calling me on my direct line, 207-301-6275, or via email at llooke@pbmc.org. Remember, too, that you can get the latest information anytime by calling our frequently updated, 24/7 COVID-19 phone line at 207-301-6300, or by visiting our website at www.quarryhill.org/covid-19-response.