



COVID-19 Update

January 22, 2021

The vaccine roll-outs continue with clinics this week at Bethany Center, Webster House, and Lytton Gardens. We could not be happier for all of our residents and staff who have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine – and some Webster House staff who have now completed their second dose as well.

However, we do want to temper everyone's expectations about what this vaccination will mean for us in the short run – which is not as short as we would like. Until we have a much larger percentage of the population vaccinated and the spread of the virus is contained, we will need to continue with our standard health practices: wearing masks, keeping our distance, minimizing social contact, washing our hands, and avoiding groups of people. And of course, paying attention for the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and staying home and getting tested if a case is suspected.

There are a couple of reasons we have to keep up our defenses. First of all, although the vaccination has a remarkable 95% effectiveness, this does mean 5% – or 1 in 20 – of people who get the vaccine are still susceptible to infection. We have no way of knowing who that 1 in 20 is, so safety is important, especially while the virus is still widespread.

Secondly, there is a possibility that those who have received the vaccine may be able to *spread* the COVID-19 virus to others even while being immune themselves. While this is being studied, it is best to act as if it is possible and continue to follow the standard public health protocols to protect yourself and others.

We hate to be the bearer of bad news, but we will need to continue with the safety practices we've put in place for the foreseeable future. Even if things improve significantly, your lives are unlikely to change much for at least a few months. We wanted you to set your expectations now, rather than be disappointed once you've had your second vaccine shot and hear that the dining room still won't be open.

We are hopeful that the vaccination process and other public safety measures will begin to turn the COVID-19 infection trends around. We are eager to get things back much closer to normal. But we are not there yet. Until this virus is much more controlled, we need to stay consistent and keep up the practices that have helped us so far. Hang in there!