



## What is Covia doing about COVID-19?

Update: March 6, 2020

As a supplement to the information being provided by your individual community, we wanted to provide you with an update on how Covia is continuing to monitor the Coronavirus, or COVID-19, and to develop organizational protocols based on the most current information.

This week, Covia established a COVID-19 Task Force, including Grant Edelstone, Senior Director of Risk Management; Cynthia Shelby, Regional Quality and Care Nurse; Laura Darling, VP of Communication and Spiritual Care; and Prab Brinton, VP of Human Resources. This team is meeting daily and staying in regular contact with our communities and programs to ensure they have the preparation and resources they need.

Individual communities are implementing protocols based on the recommendations of their local County Department of Public Health, in consultation with the Risk and Clinical team. Please talk to your Executive Director, Health Care Administrator, or Housing Administrator for details about how your community is responding.

We encourage anyone who exhibits cold- or flu-like symptoms, including coughing, fever, shortness of breath, or sore throat, to remain in their home until they can be confirmed by a physician as being COVID-free or their symptoms resolve. Employees who have these symptoms should see their personal physician for testing, medical evaluation, and a medical release before returning to work. If you are a community resident, staff will work with you to provide food and other necessary supplies during this period.

We have created a webpage that we will update with additional information as needed. It can be found at <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/>. We will also distribute a printed update each Friday.

Thank you for taking care of yourself and your community.



## What is Covia doing about COVID-19?

Update: March 13, 2020

As a supplement to the information being provided by your individual community or program, this update has information on how Covia is continuing to monitor and respond to the Coronavirus, or COVID-19.

First and foremost, each day we are checking the recommendations provided by the California Department of Public Health, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Departments of Public Health in each county where our communities and programs are located and following their guidance.

On Tuesday, we hosted a webinar for our Executive Directors, Housing Administrators, Directors of Nursing, Directors of Resident Health Services, Directors of Staff Development, Resident Service Coordinators, and other interested persons to share current procedures and available resources.

Our Community Services department has closed Market Day programs, Ruth's Table classes, and other congregate programs for the remainder of March. Our communities also are abiding by the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health to curtail or modify group events and travel.

The Well Connected and Social Call programs have reached out to our communities as well as to other organizations to offer assistance in providing programs via phone or online. All are welcome to participate. You can contact them at 877-797-7299 or [coviaconnections@covia.org](mailto:coviaconnections@covia.org).

Among other recommendations, our Human Resources department is emphasizing to staff the importance of staying home if they are sick, or exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

We have updated our COVID-19 Responses and Resources webpage with further information for residents, participants, staff, volunteers, visitors, and vendors. The link is <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/> and it also appears as part of the top menu for the Covia.org website as well as the website for each community.

As always, thank you for taking care of yourself and your community.



## COVID-19 Update

March 20, 2020

As a supplement to the information being provided by your individual community, this update provides information on how Covia as an organization is continuing to monitor and respond to the Coronavirus, or COVID-19.

On March 18, Covia was informed of a confirmed case of COVID-19 at Lytton Gardens, our Affordable Housing Community in Palo Alto. Lytton Gardens has responded with additional precautions in addition to following the guidance of the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health. Read our blog post at <https://covia.org/blog/covid-19-update/> for further information and details on our response.

No other communities report any cases of COVID-19. Our communities continue to monitor daily and are prepared to act if any cases are reported. The Covia COVID-19 Task Force also continues to meet daily and to provide support and resources to all of our communities and programs.

As of 5:00 pm, March 16, our Support Services office in Walnut Creek was closed in response to Shelter In Place orders given by the Contra Costa Department of Public Health. Support Services employees will continue working remotely and will be available during normal business hours.

In accordance with Governor Gavin Newsom's Stay At Home order issued on March 19 visitors may no longer make in-person visits to any community except for certain compassionate care situations, such as end of life. Instead, we encourage your loved ones to stay connected by phone or online. We strongly encourage residents to remain in their homes as much as possible and to maintain a minimum of six feet of distance from others when in public. Covia has also established screening guidelines for all staff, vendors, and delivery persons coming to our communities. Community staff have been issued with a letter indicating that they are involved in essential services so that they may travel to and from work.

Bethany Center Senior Housing resident Margie Ramirez and Covia's Chief Strategy and Advancement Officer Mary McMullin were interviewed for an NPR report on the lack of guidance for HUD housing related to Coronavirus. It was broadcast on the Here and Now program on Monday, March 16. The link to the story and other updates are on the Covia website at <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/>.



## COVID-19 Update

March 27, 2020

Although we have no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in any of our communities, we continue to make every effort to be prepared. Thank you to all of our residents for cooperating with the shelter-in-place orders. And we want to give tremendous thanks to our staff whose care, compassion, and hard work are apparent every day.

This week, the Directors of Nursing and Infection Preventionists met via Zoom to go over their infection control plans and procedures and to share best practices. They, along with members of the Task Force, have been inventorying our current stores of personal protective equipment (PPE) and finding sources for more. In particular, Covia has placed an order through LeadingAge California and other vendors for N95 masks and gowns to supply all of our communities. These supplies should be arriving in the coming week.

Our Community Services programs Well Connected and Social Call continue to add new participants and volunteers daily. They have also started a program to allow people to send cards to participants. If you're interested in participating, please reach out to them at 877-797-7299 or [coviaconnections@covia.org](mailto:coviaconnections@covia.org).

We're pleased to report that the resident of Lytton Gardens who tested positive for COVID-19 is recovering and doing well. One other resident at that community with presenting symptoms tested negative for COVID-19 and no other cases have been reported there. In other communities, 4 residents and one staff person have tested negative, and we await the results of tests for 4 more residents and 3 staff. We are always hopeful that we will make our way through, but we know that we have further to go in managing this crisis.

If you have not already done so, we invite you to read the message from Kevin Gerber, Covia's President and CEO, which can be found on our blog at <https://covia.org/blog/letter-from-kevin-gerber-president-and-ceo/>. To quote from his letter, "Stay safe, stay well, and stay connected."



## COVID-19 Update

April 3, 2020

With the extension of the Shelter-In-Place order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom and our counties this week, Covia is entering a new phase of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic as we prepare for the long haul.

Even though we continue to have no cases of COVID-19 among our residents or staff, it is vitally important that we continue to be vigilant. Although it would be easy to become lax, we strongly encourage all residents and staff to continue with physical distancing and excellent hand washing and sanitary procedures. Please follow the guidance of your local community leaders.

Cynthia Shelby, Covia's Regional Quality and Care Nurse, has been working with each community to get staff fit tested for N95 masks, a process that should be complete by the end of next week. Covia continues to work on acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE) as we anticipate future needs.

In light of the continued Shelter-In-Place orders, Market Day, a Covia Community Services program, will stay closed at least throughout the month of April. The Market Day team is working with Covia's Affordable Communities and other Market Day sites to ensure food security for residents and participants. In Southern California, the National Guard is delivering food to several Affordable Housing sites that contract with Covia for Resident Service Coordination, providing much needed support.

Covia has updated the COVID-19 response pages on its website at [covia.org](https://covia.org). In addition to adding new information for families, there is also a page where people can record a video expressing their appreciation for the Covia staff. You are invited to share your message at <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/thank-our-staff/>. You may also send written messages thanking our team members for their work under these difficult circumstances to your local community leadership, who will share them with employees.

Covia has set up an email inbox at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org) where you can reach the COVID-19 Incident Command Center with your questions, comments, or concerns. Please contact us and we will respond as soon as we can.

Stay safe, stay well, and stay connected.



## COVID-19 Update

April 10, 2020

We are glad to report that we do not have any cases of COVID-19 in any of our communities. Thank you to everyone for doing your part to stay safe and stop the spread of the virus. Special thanks to our front line staff for showing up and caring for people every day. You are wonderful.

Covia has devoted much of its efforts this week to acquiring and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to supply our health care staff among the different communities. Support Services made a large purchase that will be securely stored at Los Gatos Meadows and distributed as needed. An order of 90,000 surgical masks, almost 20,000 facepiece filtering respirators, and over 2,000 disposable gowns arrived on Wednesday, giving us enough supplies to last for approximately 90 days.

We also want to thank Congressman Mike Thompson's office for connecting us with a donor in American Canyon who provided boxes of masks and gloves; Masks for Docs which reached out to us to offer to help with our PPE needs; and all of the residents, staff members, and others who have created and shared cloth masks with our communities. Please refer to your community leadership on the expectations for mask use in your community.

Covia's IT department is working with Zoom to establish new protocols that will make Zoom calls HIPAA compliant, allowing residents to use the platform for telehealth appointments. We will provide more details when the agreement with Zoom is complete.

Ruth's Table, one of Covia's Community Services programs, has started a new initiative called *Enduring Inspiration*. You are invited to make artwork of any medium and share it with Ruth's Table. The *Enduring Inspiration* project culminates in an art show later this year that will display completed works and works-in-progress. Learn more at [www.ruthstable.org](http://www.ruthstable.org).

As many of us observe Holy Days this week, we want to give a special thank you to the chaplains in our communities. Their work is highlighted on our blog in a post on staying spiritually connected at <https://covia.org/news/>. However you celebrate, we wish you joy, peace, and comfort.



## COVID-19 Update

April 17, 2020

As we shared yesterday, San Francisco Towers reported two confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday – one resident and one staff person. In addition to the Infection Prevention and Control Plan already in place, the Towers immediately implemented a Department of Public Health-prescribed protocol to respond to these positive cases of COVID-19. On Thursday, Chris Ichien, VP of Life Plan Operations, drove to San Francisco to deliver face shields provided by Webster House Health Center and to offer assistance to SFT's leadership, which was well prepared to respond to this eventuality. All of Covia stands at the ready to provide further resources and support. We will post updates on the Covia website at <https://covia.org/blog/covid-19-update-san-francisco-towers/>.

Though we all had our fingers crossed that we would get through this crisis without any more cases of COVID-19 beyond the one resolved case at Lytton Gardens, we expected this day would come and planned accordingly. We are continually reviewing our practices and procedures to support resident and staff health and safety. Please do your part by sheltering in place, practicing good hand hygiene, and maintaining physical distancing.

Purchasing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remains a significant task for Support Services. This week, we were able to purchase 50,000 disposable gowns and 288 gallons of hand sanitizing liquid.

Our staff members continue to provide exemplary care under extraordinary circumstances. Covia's Human Resources department has prepared a survey to ask staff how Covia can better support them during this crisis. The survey is open until Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. We hope all Covia staff members will participate.

The Covia Foundation has resources to help residents with questions about how the CARES Act affects their taxes, retirement accounts, and estate planning. An article is available on the Covia blog at <https://covia.org/news/> or contact Katharine Miller, Executive Director of the Covia Foundation, at [kmiller@covia.org](mailto:kmiller@covia.org) for further information.

We realize the news of active cases at one of our Life Plan communities may be upsetting. As an organization, Covia is working on every front to follow best practices, keep our residents safe, support our staff and treat them with respect, and live up to our guiding principles. Although it has affected many things, the Coronavirus will not change that.

As a reminder, if you have any questions for Covia's COVID-19 task force, you are welcome to send emails to [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).





## COVID-19 Update

April 24, 2020

As an organization, Covia is working to be proactive in its response to the Coronavirus. When two cases of COVID-19 were discovered last week at San Francisco Towers, Covia paid up-front for testing for all Skilled Nursing residents and staff to prevent any spread of the virus, even though this was not required by the San Francisco Department of Public Health. As a result, one additional resident was found to be positive and has been transferred to an isolated area with staff not shared by other residents. One other SFT staff person, who had been self-isolating since Monday, April 20, also tested positive. No other cases have been reported by our other communities. As always, we thank everyone for your continued vigilance.

We added a Frequently Asked Questions page to the COVID-19 resources section of our website here: <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/frequently-asked-questions/>. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

We posted an interview with Chris Ichien, VP of Life Plan Operations, on our YouTube channel, explaining how Support Services is working to acquire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all of our communities. You can view it here: <https://youtu.be/axsN9XiwXhg>.

The IT department has established a HIPAA-compliant Zoom account so that Skilled Nursing residents in our communities can have telehealth appointments with their health care providers.

Covia's Social Call program is searching for volunteers to send cards to others who may be isolated during the shelter-in-place order. So far, volunteers have sent over 4,000 cards to people throughout the country. You can learn how this is impacting volunteers and recipients alike on the Covia blog at <https://covia.org/blog/staying-connected-with-card-writing/>. If you are interested in volunteering or in receiving a card, send an email to [socialcall@covia.org](mailto:socialcall@covia.org).

Covia's employees continue to impress us every day with their skill and dedication. We continue to look for the best ways to thank them in word and deed. This week, Kevin Gerber, Ron Schaefer, and Mary McMullin all posted videos to thank our staff (and Mary is making them masks!). You can create a video as well by going to <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/thank-our-staff/>.





## COVID-19 Update

May 1, 2020

No communities aside from San Francisco Towers have any cases of COVID-19. We want to extend our support and gratitude to the San Francisco Towers community, both residents and staff, who are working very hard to contain the Coronavirus. Currently, two residents in Skilled Nursing and two staff have active cases of COVID-19. According to the Towers, all four are doing well. One other staff member has recovered and is back at work. We are sorry to report that the first resident who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in April passed away on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. All of us at Covia send our heartfelt condolences to the resident's family and friends.

With another month of shelter-in-place orders ahead for most of us, we wanted to share the advice Grant Edelstone, Senior Director of Risk Management, gave Covia's Expanded Leadership Team this week: "The best risk management at this time is to stay the course." Though we are all anxious to get through to the other side of this pandemic, we are not through it yet. Thank you to everyone for holding fast.

In the month of April, Covia's Market Day program delivered bags of produce and rice to 1,593 seniors across 12 senior affordable communities throughout California. You can learn more about this program on the Covia blog at <https://covia.org/blog/market-day-delivers/>.

With shelter-in-place orders extended for Contra Costa County where our Walnut Creek offices are located, the Support Services team continues to work from home, making adjustments as need be. Auditors as well as the Finance team are working remotely to ensure that we meet our compliance calendar and other financial obligations.

In response to our recent employee survey, this week Covia launched the Essential Support program, developed by our Human Resources department. Essential employees are receiving additional financial and material support in recognition of their dedication to their work and ongoing contributions on behalf of our residents. The program used feedback from the survey to ensure that our team members are getting support that truly helps them in their daily lives. We are reminded every day that heroes work here.

As always, if you have questions, please feel free to contact us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).



## COVID-19 Update

May 8, 2020

Today, we want to send special thanks to the teams who work in our Skilled Nursing and Resident Health Centers as we observe National Nurses Week (May 6-12) and National Skilled Nursing Care Week (May 10-16). Please send kind words to all of those who are caring for very vulnerable people under very difficult circumstances.

Covia's COVID-19 Task Force shows no sign of ending soon. We continue to meet each weekday morning at 9:30, discussing the latest information and regulatory requirements and how we can support our Life Plan and Affordable Communities, Community Services programs, and Support Services team. You can reach us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

Some positive news: San Francisco Towers reports that one of their residents who previously tested positive for COVID-19 has been able to move out of the isolation area back to the Resident Health Center, and the second will likely "graduate" shortly. SFT's COVID-19 positive staff members are also doing well and appear to be on track to return to work soon.

However, the Towers also reported on Wednesday that an Independent Living resident tested positive for COVID-19 after being admitted to the hospital. This resident had been in contact with other IL residents, who must now be in isolation for 14 days.

We know that people are restless to open things up and get back to a more normal life, but we must keep taking infection prevention precautions seriously. COVID-19 cases continue to spread, and the numbers are likely to increase as people become impatient. Now is the time to be especially mindful of having minimal contact with people outside of our homes.

Please abide by the orders established by the State and your County's Health Departments. Each community's leadership is responsible for applying these orders, which vary from county to county. They take no pleasure in enforcing rules that make you unhappy, but are simply doing their best to keep you, your family, your neighbors, and your friends safe.

With Mother's Day this Sunday, we realize this is particularly frustrating. Unfortunately, this virus doesn't care about our feelings, holidays, or traditions. We trust that you will find ways to connect with your loved ones that don't involve meeting in person. All of us – residents, staff, volunteers, program participants, and more – are chafing at these restrictions. But the best way we can care for each other is to stay put, and stay safe.



## COVID-19 Update

May 15, 2020

May is Older Americans Month. On Tuesday of this week, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a proclamation declaring May 2020, as “Older Californians Month” in the State of California. This is not how we intended to celebrate!

As we approach two months under the statewide stay-at-home order, McKnight’s Senior Living media may have explained the current mood best in its Thursday Coronavirus Briefing: “Our black-hole ennui is no doubt a by-product of the conflicting chaotic directives coming at us daily: reopen/do not reopen, lift lockdowns/extend lockdowns, go back to work/stay home. Even the most independent among us, the type A personalities who demand control at all times, are seeking guidance.” Thank you to all of our communities’ leaders, providing guidance on a daily basis even when so many things are unclear.

There are currently 3 active cases of COVID-19 associated with the San Francisco Towers community. The Independent Living resident who tested COVID-positive has returned to SFT from the hospital and is now in isolation and doing well. Two staff members tested positive and are isolating at home. The other staff members who tested positive have recovered and returned to work, and two SFT residents “graduated” from the isolation area and returned to their Resident Health Center after being cleared of COVID-19. No other positive cases have been reported at our other communities.

On Monday, the California Department of Public Health issued an All-Facilities Letter requiring all Skilled Nursing Facilities to submit a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan by June 1. These will include plans for testing, infection prevention and control, personal protective equipment (PPE), staffing shortages, designated spaces for COVID-19 positive residents to minimize transmission risk, and designated staff members for communication. We are working on a template that each skilled nursing area can adapt for local use.

On Wednesday, Grant Edelstone, Senior Director of Risk Management, and Cynthia Shelby, Regional Quality and Care Nurse, presented at a virtual town hall offered by ECRI and Caring Communities. (ECRI is an independent nonprofit organization authority on medical practices and products that provide the safest, most cost-effective care.) Celena Romero, ECRI’s Senior Risk Management Consultant, noted that “The proactive work that Covia is doing is exceptional.”

As National Skilled Nursing Care Week comes to an end, we also want to recognize the exceptional work done by our clinical teams, health care staff, and skilled nursing. Here is our latest blog post on providing care during uncertainty – irrespective of COVID-19: <https://covia.org/blog/providing-care-during-uncertainty-covia-and-skilled-nursing/>



## COVID-19 Update

May 22, 2020

We are pleased to report that there are no new cases of COVID-19 this week. Other than the one resident and two team members associated with San Francisco Towers, there are no other cases of COVID-19 at our communities. Thank you to everyone for your diligence.

Much of our thought and energy this week has turned to how we can wisely approach changes to the stay-at-home orders, balancing risk and safety. Fundamentally, these decisions need to be made on a county-by-county and community-by-community basis.

For now, the general guidance remains essentially the same:

- Please stay home unless you are leaving for essential travel.
- Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Screen yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. Stay home and consult your health care provider if you have concerns or are unwell.
- When you do leave your home,
  - Wear a mask or cloth face covering that fully covers your nose and mouth;
  - Maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others;

We live in community and what we do affects the others around us. Please take these steps, not just for your own health and well-being, but also to support the health and well-being of your neighbors, colleagues, and companions in community.

And our communities do continue to grow and change. In May, the Sales and Marketing team hosted four webinars online as a new way to reach prospective residents while tours and visits are not feasible. This week, they hosted Covia Coffee Talk, inviting Covia residents to share their experiences via Zoom, and 115 people attended.

For all the negative perceptions of senior living in the news, we know that our communities are still places where good things happen. We would love to hear what living in community means for you right now. Please let us know at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

This weekend, we remember those who have lost their lives while serving in our Armed Forces. There are many ways to serve our country and our community, and we honor them all. Happy Memorial Day.



## COVID-19 Update

May 29, 2020

This week, each of our Life Plan communities has been finalizing its state-mandated COVID-19 mitigation plan for Skilled Nursing. Plans are due to the California Department of Public Health by June 1 and must include information on how we provide testing, infection prevention and control, personal protective equipment, staffing, designation of space, and communication.

We feel prepared to address these issues because we have already been doing so - and successfully. We commend San Francisco Towers for their great work in preventing the spread of COVID-19 at their community. As of this writing, only one staff member remains in self-isolation and should be cleared soon. It has obviously been a team effort to contain the virus – not just by the health care team, but by everyone who has followed protocols of distancing, face coverings, and hygiene. Thank you!

Covia's Community Services programs are continuing to serve people in our communities and elsewhere. Market Day provided deliveries of produce to four locations in the past two weeks. The Home Match program is matching home owners and home seekers through virtual interviews. And the Well Connected program is providing the platform for the American Society on Aging to offer a series of workshops on Creative Aging that had been scheduled for the Aging in America Conference.

This week on the Covia blog, we highlighted the work of Covia's Resident Service Coordinators. "Under normal circumstances, RSCs coordinate a wide variety of services, ranging from offering social and cultural programs within their communities to helping residents access benefit programs and medical care. During the shelter in place order, RSCs have continued connecting residents to essential services, which now include getting access to food deliveries, masks, and hand sanitizer." Learn more about how they support residents at [covia.org/news/](https://covia.org/news/).

Last week, we asked what living in community means to you. Thank you to those who sent in your stories. One resident at Canterbury Woods shared, "Living here, right now, is pure gift to me. My family offered to bring me to their home if I didn't feel safe. I told them I feel safer at Canterbury than anywhere else I could imagine... I'm proud to call Canterbury Woods my home."

If you want to tell us about your community, or have further questions or comments, please email us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org). Stay safe and healthy, and have a good weekend.



## COVID-19 Update

June 5, 2020

In some ways, it was a pleasant surprise that COVID-19 was not the largest topic of conversation this week at Covia. We have no active cases of COVID-19 in any of our communities, so the focus could turn elsewhere.

On the positive side, Covia shared the news of its planned affiliation with Front Porch – a step that would provide greater organizational and financial resources to address and manage coronavirus or other crises.

At the same time, all of us are deeply aware of the protests against police violence taking place in our communities and our nation. This is not a separate issue from COVID-19. George Floyd, who was killed by a police officer on May 25<sup>th</sup>, had tested positive for coronavirus and survived the disease in April. To survive a pandemic that has disproportionately affected African Americans in this country only to be killed by someone whose job is to serve and protect is a tragedy – and part of a larger problem.

Last Sunday, Kevin Gerber, President and CEO, sent a letter to Covia's staff, tying this issue to Covia's values: "We say that we have been shaped by our values of welcome, inclusion, social justice, and grace. We will do our utmost to demonstrate those values in all that we do." His full letter is posted on Covia's blog at <https://covia.org/blog/black-lives-matter-2/>. Thank you to our residents and staff who work on behalf of justice for all.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us. This week, the task force explored options for baseline and surveillance testing for our skilled nursing facilities and other residents and staff. We also began discussing what guidance we can offer our communities to help them develop protocols to allow visitors while still practicing physical distancing and supporting safety for everyone. These protocols will need to be decided by your Executive Director or Housing Administrator on a community-by-community basis, depending on your location and situation.

For a moment, we believed we might be able to open the Support Services office. On Tuesday, Contra Costa County revised its Health Order to include opening office spaces. However, upon closer inspection, we found that "office workplaces may resume operation when telework is not possible." A survey of our Support Services staff found that a vast majority are successfully working from home, so for the time being, that is where you will find them.

We wish you a safe and healthy week.



## COVID-19 Update

June 12, 2020

This week, many of our communities shared some of their creative solutions to begin to allow family visitors at their communities. They are designating specific spaces and ensuring they are cleaned between visits, setting up outdoor spaces with seating at appropriate distances, and making even further adaptations to their community life to help loved ones stay connected. Obviously, we are taking these steps gradually and carefully in hopes that there will be no ill effects for our residents or staff.

Among other creative solutions to help people stay active while staying at an appropriate distance, Spring Lake Village has set up a par course around the campus with 17 different stations and 36 exercises. You can learn more about it on the Covia blog: <https://covia.org/blog/spring-lake-village-creates-new-par-course/>.

In our Skilled Nursing Facilities, baseline testing for all residents and staff is almost complete with no positive cases of COVID-19 discovered so far. Our screening process for employees has also proven its worth as one employee at SFT, out of the building since May 14, recently returned a positive result. However, as SFT's Executive Director Christina Spence notes, "Our sick policies allow employees to stay home when they are not well. This prevents employees from returning to work while they might be infectious, which helps to stop the spread of the coronavirus." This is an important reminder that fair labor practices are of benefit to everyone.

This week, the Task Force focused in particular on providing guidance regarding staff vacation time. As Chief Operating Officer Ron Schaefer notes, this is a marathon that we have been sprinting for almost three months. "We have to encourage and allow our team members to take time off from work so they can let down from the intensity, refresh their body and renew their spirit." We have shared protocols to provide guidelines and resources for managers and their direct reports.

We received a beautiful letter this week at [c19info@covia.org](mailto:c19info@covia.org), written by the Russian-speaking tenants of Bethany Center Senior Housing who shared stories about the selfless work of the staff. "We consider them our true heroes, they were on call every minute of the day and night, regardless of their personal needs. We saw how tired they were, but with every new day they were again fulfilling above and beyond their call of duty." They asked us "to recognize the extraordinary efforts of Rafael Zamudio and his team as well," and we are pleased to do so.

Have a great week.





## COVID-19 Update

June 19, 2020

We have officially spent one quarter of the year under the statewide shelter-in-place order, first announced by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 19. We want to thank everyone for maintaining such strong, healthy, and caring communities under very difficult circumstances. We encourage you to maintain the healthy practices you have built thus far and to continue to work together creatively and compassionately as the pandemic continues.

On Wednesday, LeadingAge, an advocacy group for non-profit aging services organizations such as Covia, announced a national Act for Older Adults campaign, inviting people to demand that Congress enact comprehensive relief for older Americans. A National Day of Action for Older Adults is planned for next Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. You can learn more about the campaign at <https://www.leadingage.org/act>.

Yesterday, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued new guidance requiring people to wear face coverings when they are in high-risk situations, which include being in an indoor public space (such as the indoor spaces in our communities). The Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings document is being shared along with this update for your reference. You can also find the link and more information on the CDPH website at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-128.aspx>.

As it happens, last month Covia ordered 5,000 reusable/washable face coverings featuring our logo. They have finally arrived and will be supplied to all of our employees starting today. Chris Ichien, VP of Life Plan Operations, will deliver them to Canterbury Woods today and other communities starting next week. Each employee will receive 4 face coverings, allowing people to change them out for clean ones daily or share with family or friends.

Yesterday also marked the start of National Nursing Assistants Week, which runs through June 25<sup>th</sup>. This year's very appropriate theme is "Kindness in Action." We want to give a special thanks to all of the Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Resident Assistants (RAs) at Covia and in every nursing home and Life Plan community who are truly on the front lines of the Coronavirus crisis. These are the people who feed, bathe, dress, and tend to the most vulnerable among us every day. Please show them some special appreciation this week. We are deeply grateful for all they do.



SONIA Y. ANGELL, MD, MPH  
State Public Health Officer & Director

# State of California—Health and Human Services Agency California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

June 18, 2020

## GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS

Because of our collective actions, California has limited the spread of COVID-19 and associated hospitalizations and deaths in our state. Still, the risk for COVID-19 remains and the increasing number of Californians who are leaving their homes for work and other needs, increases the risk for COVID-19 exposure and infection.

Over the last four months, we have learned a lot about COVID-19 transmission, most notably that people who are infected but are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic play an important part in community spread. The use of face coverings by everyone can limit the release of infected droplets when talking, coughing, and/or sneezing, as well as reinforce physical distancing.

This document updates existing [CDPH guidance](#) for the use of cloth face coverings by the general public when outside the home. It mandates that face coverings be worn state-wide in the circumstances and with the exceptions outlined below. It does not substitute for existing guidance about social distancing and handwashing.

### Guidance

People in California must wear face coverings when they are in the high-risk situations listed below:

- Inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space;<sup>1</sup>
- Obtaining services from the healthcare sector in settings including, but not limited to, a hospital, pharmacy, medical clinic, laboratory, physician or dental office, veterinary clinic, or blood bank;<sup>2</sup>
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit or while in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle;
- Engaged in work, whether at the workplace or performing work off-site, when:
  - Interacting in-person with any member of the public;
  - Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;

<sup>1</sup> Unless exempted by state guidelines for specific public settings (e.g., school or childcare center)

<sup>2</sup> Unless directed otherwise by an employee or healthcare provider



- Working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;
- Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities;
- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present when unable to physically distance.
- Driving or operating any public transportation or paratransit vehicle, taxi, or private car service or ride-sharing vehicle when passengers are present. When no passengers are present, face coverings are strongly recommended.
- While outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible.

*The following individuals are exempt from wearing a face covering:*

- Persons age two years or under. These very young children must not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service.
- Persons who are seated at a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service, while they are eating or drinking, provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence.
- Persons who are engaged in outdoor work or recreation such as swimming, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, when alone or with household members, and when they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.

- Persons who are incarcerated. Prisons and jails, as part of their mitigation plans, will have specific guidance on the wearing of face coverings or masks for both inmates and staff.

**Note:** Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others should wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

## **Background**

### *What is a cloth face covering?*

A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.

### *How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent spread of COVID-19?*

There is scientific evidence to suggest that use of cloth face coverings by the public during a pandemic could help reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, washing hands, and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

### *When should I wear a cloth face covering?*

You should wear face coverings when in public places, particularly when those locations are indoors or in other areas where physical distancing is not possible

### *How should I care for a cloth face covering?*

It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face. Discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric



## COVID-19 Update

June 26, 2020

On Thursday, Chief Operating Officer Ron Schaefer presented a summary of Covia's work to address the COVID-19 pandemic to the Quality First Committee. He notes, "While we may conclude that these low numbers of infection are a direct result of our strict response, we believe that would be only partially true. Even with our strong efforts, the potential for a notable outbreak and associated deaths are high. Our successful fight against this virus has more credit due to God's grace than to our efforts. Our low COVID numbers are not to be proud of but to be thankful for. We are extremely proud of our team as we work together to do what we can to reduce the potentials for exposure."

Numbers are beginning to climb again in California and are spiking in some of the counties where you live. We are indeed doing what we can to reduce the potentials for exposures. **However, we need your help and cooperation in order to provide health and safety for everyone.**

As hard as it is to continue to shelter in place when things appear to be opening up, we would ask that you remain home unless you are going out for essential business.

As annoying as it is to wear a mask every time you leave your home, we would ask that you comply with the statewide order to cover your nose and mouth in public.

We would also ask that you remind your friends and family to comply by these practices as well – for their sake, for your sake, and for the sake of many others. We will not be able to resume normal activities until we reduce the spread of infections, and this virus will continue to spread until we as a society make the efforts necessary to stop it – or until we have a vaccine.

The Covia Foundation announced this week that the 9th Annual Celtic Cup Golf Tournament has been cancelled due to the pandemic. They add, "We are so grateful to this year's sponsors and participants who have pledged their support despite the cancellation. Their support will directly help provide services for vulnerable and isolated seniors during these difficult times." Thank you to these sponsors for their generosity. You can find them listed on our website at <https://covia.org/giving/events/>.

As part of our Employee Essentials program, starting this week team members were able to select fun Family Time options – Netflix, Disney+, Amazon, and more, to be distributed in July. Task force members have shared our entertainment recommendations, attached. We hope this makes it a little easier to stay home!

Send us your questions, comments, or movie recommendations at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

# **Covia's COVID-19 Task Force**

## **Stay-at-Home Entertainment Recommendations**

### **Prab Brinton, VP of HR:**

*300* (Amazon Prime)  
*The Heat* (Amazon Prime)  
*Miss Congeniality 1 & 2* (Amazon Prime)  
*Like A Boss* (Amazon Prime)

### **Chris Dana, VP of IT:**

For the arm chair extreme sports/nature fanatics – *Magnetic* on Netflix  
For those who like quirky people and food – *Somebody Feed Phil* on Netflix  
For twisted souls and Monty Python cronies – *JoJo Rabbit* on Amazon Prime

### **Laura Darling, VP of Communications and Spiritual Care**

*The Battered Bastards of Baseball* (Netflix) – About the last independent baseball team  
*Bathtubs Over Broadway* (Netflix) – You will leave humming “My bathroom”  
*Tea With the Dames* (Amazon Prime or Hulu) – Hang out with Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Joan Plowright, and Eileen Atkins  
*Maiden* (Amazon Prime) – The first all-women’s crew to compete in the Whitbread (Series)  
*Formula One: Drive to Survive* (Netflix) – Formula One racing is amazing. Also, those drivers are mighty easy on the eyes.

### **Grant Edelstone, Senior Director of Risk Management**

*A Grand Day Out* or *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (Amazon)

### **Chris Ichien**

Considering I mostly watch kids movies .... I’ll recommend a personal favorite, *Meet The Parents* (on Starz or Amazon Prime)

### **Tracy Powell, VP of Community Services:**

*Schitt’s Creek* (Netflix) — hilarious!!!  
*Chef’s Table* (Netflix) Shows how chefs are artists!!!

### **Ron Schaefer, Chief Operating Officer:**

#### Socially Minded

Amazon Prime Video:	<i>Harriet</i>
HBO and Rental:	<i>Crash</i>

#### Mental Escape

Amazon Prime Video:	<i>Super 8</i>
Netflix:	<i>Ex Machina</i>

#### Binge-Worthy

Amazon Prime Video:	<i>Endeavour</i>
Netflix:	<i>The Crown</i>
CBS All Access:	<i>Picard</i>

### **Karim Sultan, VP of Affordable Housing:**

*Ugly Delicious* (Netflix) is a good food show  
*Ozark* (Netflix) and *Fauda* (Netflix) – both are exceptional  
(*Ozark* is seconded by Prab Brinton, Chris Dana, Chris Ichien, and Tracy Powell)



## COVID-19 Update

July 2, 2020

This week, St. Paul's Towers Executive Director Mary Linde reported in her daily memo that a resident who had visited a friend off-campus was now a person under investigation when the friend tested positive for COVID-19. Due to this, the resident and 11 other residents on the same floor are quarantined for 14 days.

Shortly after our COVID-19 memo went out last Friday, we learned that another team member at San Francisco Towers has tested positive for COVID-19 after testing negative twice previously.

On Tuesday, Canterbury Woods reported that one of its team members tested positive for the virus, the first case for that community. This morning, Spring Lake Village also reported its first case, with a team member testing positive.

We are sending this memo out on a Thursday due to the Independence Day holiday. As much as we want to celebrate our independence, this year we must recognize our interdependence.

All of us live in community. At Covia, we are intentional about it, but it is true no matter where we live. What we do affects each other. If there is anything that this pandemic has taught us it's that we cannot pretend otherwise – no matter what we would like to believe.

For the Fourth of July, we know that people wanted to gather and celebrate with family and friends, but we can't. By now, we all hoped that the lock-downs would be lifted, not put back in place. Unfortunately, these restrictions are not going to change until the current infection rates are brought under control.

And so thank you for wearing your mask, for maintaining your distance, for washing your hands, for staying home except for essential travel. It's not fun and it's not easy. But thank you for doing your part.

The news has been difficult and depressing. We want to encourage you this weekend to revisit all of those important self-care practices we had to develop when the pandemic first started, what seems like so very long ago. Write down how you're feeling. Talk to a friend. Find something that makes you laugh. Meditate. Get some exercise. And most of all, please be kind to yourself. These are hard times, but we will get through them.







## COVID-19 Update

July 10, 2020

With record high numbers of new cases nationwide and increases in new cases and hospitalizations throughout the state of California, it's been another week of disappointing news about COVID-19. In our communities, too, we have had a couple of new cases reported among employees in our life plan communities. (There are no known cases in our affordable communities.)

There is good news, however. As these cases emerged, our life plan communities, supported by their county health departments, have been doing significant numbers of tests that so far have been coming back negative – a trend we hope continues. We believe this underscores how important it is to wash hands regularly and to practice physical distancing and wearing masks when at work and when outside the home.

This week, the COVID-19 Task Force has been discussing who we should test and how often, as well as how to provide the most effective screening tools for our workforce. Our IT department is exploring a couple of apps that might supplement the current screening protocols we currently have in place. We expect to decide on an application and begin implementation before the end of the month.

Today, Grant Edelstone, our Senior Director of Risk Management, was the guest speaker at Covia's Brown Bag Lunch program – a monthly Zoom presentation for all employees. He shared about building a culture of safety that seeks to learn from mistakes and near misses in order to continuously improve. "We can't do anything better if we don't learn about it," Grant noted. All of us on the Task Force take this seriously as we work to mitigate risk and build safe and healthy communities and programs.

This month, as part of our Spiritual Care program, residents and interested team members are invited to read a book by local storyteller Joel ben Izzy who will present a Zoom discussion and Q & A on Monday, August 3. He describes the book, *The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness*, as "a book about stories and story telling and how they can get us through difficult times." You can learn more about it (and hear a story) at <https://gather.video/fKQK>.

As always, please reach out to us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org) if you have questions, comments, or concerns.



## COVID-19 Update

July 17, 2020

This week, we have seen a few new positive cases emerge in our communities but no significant outbreaks. Our life plan communities continue to do large numbers of viral tests. By and large the results are coming back negative, even in the midst of a continued spike in California cases. We believe our ability to contain the virus is at least partially due to *everyone* following safety practices.

Some of the residents and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 have had no symptoms. This highlights a major potential risk: that asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic people who do not know they are infected and contagious may spread the virus. That this hasn't happened at Covia so far emphasizes the importance of staying the course: staying safer at home whenever possible; wearing a mask or cloth face covering whenever you are out in your community or in a public area; maintaining at least six feet of distance between yourself and others; and washing your hands regularly.

We know we sound like a broken record, but we repeat these practices because they are important. It is by taking these simple steps that we can all work towards driving down the spread of COVID-19, and hopefully towards reconnecting in person once again. Thank you to everyone who is working towards this goal.

We want to give special thanks to our Executive Directors, Health Care Administrators, Infection Preventionists, and many others on our teams who are helping us stay on target. Along with addressing the understandable frustration and anxiety of residents and families, they have to manage the expectations, reporting, regulatory requirements, and regular scrutiny from a range of government agencies, including their local and state Health Departments and the Department of Social Services. Every week, our communities get visited via Zoom or in person by someone looking for what they are doing wrong. Every day and week, our communities have to submit yet another form (or two or three or four) to report on their activities and statistics. They have borne all of this pressure with incredible grace and fortitude, and we are grateful.

There's no doubt that this pandemic is hard on everyone. In a letter we will be sending to all Covia team members, our Task Force members shared: "COVID-19 has affected all of us in multiple ways, whether or not we have the virus. Our daily lives have changed significantly, and these changes affect us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Be sure to rest, to stay in touch with friends and family, and to find ways to celebrate milestones and achievements – even if it's just getting through another week." Congratulations to all of us for making it through another week!



## COVID-19 Update

July 24, 2020

Last Friday, we had 10 positive cases of COVID-19 across 6 Covia communities, including life plan and affordable communities, plus those communities we manage but do not own. As of this writing, there are 15 cases across 7 communities. The bad news, of course, is that the numbers have increased. The good news is the increase is not an exponential spread that would suggest uncontrolled outbreaks in any location.

One indicator that we are not facing large outbreaks in our communities is that we are testing significant numbers of residents and staff members, and almost all tests are coming back negative. Because people can have COVID-19 while they are asymptomatic, testing helps us identify positive cases before there is an outbreak. A low positivity rate when nearly everyone has been tested indicates we have an accurate picture of what's going on in our communities.

Again, we want to commend everyone for maintaining the strong controls that we hope will contain this virus and prevent the spread of this disease. As a whole, the state of California still has significant work to do to get COVID-19 under control. Please remain vigilant. Stay safer at home unless you are going out on essential business. Wear your mask or face covering and maintain at least six feet of distance from others any time you are out and about in your community or the wider world. Wash your hands whenever you arrive at work or home. Playing your part will help bring the infection numbers down in our communities and beyond.

This week, our clinical team is reviewing the implications of the new requirements from the CDC for universal use of eye protection (goggles or face shields) for Health Care Providers during direct close care encounters. We have a ready supply of face shields available for our communities to use, along with other personal protective equipment (PPE) such as surgical masks and gowns.

In your mailboxes, be looking for the summer edition of Community Matters from the Covia Foundation, which highlights many of the ways all of Covia continues to live out its values in the midst of this pandemic. The article *Sheltering in Place – Adapting to a New Way of Life* notes, “Community life at Covia shifted with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of the shelter-in-place orders – residents, staff, and program participants found new ways to stay connected.” Your adaptability and creativity in the face of incredible challenges is on full display in this newsletter and in our communities and programs every day. As always, thank you for your resilience and fortitude.



## COVID-19 Update

July 31, 2020

This week, our number of positive COVID-19 cases have only increased by one across all of our communities, even with significant testing. This is a very encouraging indicator that our infection control methods are effective. Please keep doing what you are doing! You know the drill: stay safer at home. If you do leave home for essential business, cover your mouth and nose and maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from others. Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. And congratulations! Even with the continued increases of COVID-19 cases in the state of California, so far we are holding our ground.

Some people have wanted a further breakdown on the location and number of cases. We regularly post updates on our website at the link to COVID-19 Case Tracking by Community on <https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources>.

We have been fortunate so far that our Affordable Communities have had only a handful of cases – and most have had zero. Karim Sultan, VP of Affordable Housing, meets weekly with the community Housing Administrators to review procedures and to ensure the teams have the equipment they need. Covia Affordable Communities has also established practices that are stricter than required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, such as requiring daily staff screenings, to prevent community spread.

We have also been providing support for those living in shared housing situations through our Home Match program. In addition to creating a home-sharing specific questionnaire to guide positive conversations around maintaining health and safety in a shared home, and for proactively planning for the event that a homemate becomes ill, the Home Match team also sent Happiness Packages to clients. Read more about how Home Match is supporting people on our blog at <https://covia.org/blog/home-match-creates-affordable-housing-solutions-while-sheltering-in-place/>.

As we head into August, let's focus on keeping up those great practices we've put into place and finding ways to support one another. Thank you as always.

If you have any questions or comments, you can reach Covia's COVID-19 Task Force at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).



## COVID-19 Update

August 7, 2020

There have been positive trends this week in our communities as well as in California. In our Life Plan Communities, significant testing did not find any new cases of COVID-19. In our Affordable Communities, no new cases were reported. And in California overall, the 14-day rolling average has started to come down.

However, this is not the time to be complacent. Let's keep up our efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19 through our ongoing healthy practices of staying safer at home, wearing a mask whenever we leave our home for essential purposes, keeping our distance from others, and washing our hands frequently.

As we pass the six month mark of this pandemic, we as an organization are exploring how to adapt to a longer-term mind set. This is not about accepting the pandemic and its limitations as the new normal, but about ensuring the highest quality of life for residents and team members as we work collectively and creatively to support one another through the rest of this year and beyond.

On Monday, the Covia chaplains welcomed Joel ben Izzy to share his thoughts on the stories we can tell to help us during difficult times. On Thursday, Amber Carroll, Director of Well Connected, presented on Covia's Connections programs at a webinar on *Innovation and Growth during COVID-19* as part of the San Francisco Tech Council's Access and Learning Group. And today, Jodi Arnheiter, Spring Lake Village's Infection Preventionist, shared her expertise with the Sonoma County SNF Working Group.

This week, the Task Force sent a survey to the Support Services team to learn how to help them work successfully at home for the long term, with the understanding that our Walnut Creek office is unlikely to be open to most of our team until 2021. The Task Force has also streamlined our reporting forms for Life Plan and Affordable Communities to make it easier to track active and recovered cases of COVID-19.

Next Wednesday, Cynthia Shelby, Covia's Regional Quality and Care Nurse, is convening a meeting with all of our community Medical Directors to share best practices for community wellness.

In the midst of all of this, Covia received word that Fitch Ratings has affirmed Covia's A-rating with a stable outlook. VP of Finance and Corporate Controller Mitzi Hyland states, "We are on target when it comes to taking care of our residents and employees by having a solid, financially sound organization." We will get through this together.



## COVID-19 Update

August 14, 2020

This week (August 7-14) was World Mask Week. Since we were not aware of this until halfway through the week, we'd like to encourage a do-over and invite you to join in. Please share a photo of yourself in your favorite mask and send it to us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

Of course, it feels like every week is World Mask Week. As always, thank you for following all of the healthy protocols: covering your nose and mouth, keeping your distance from others, and washing your hands.

This week, Laura Darling, VP of Communications and Spiritual Care, got to talk with Jerry W. Brown, Covia's Senior Director of Affordable Housing, about his personal experience with COVID-19. After 10 days in the hospital, Jerry is now home and doing better, though as he notes, the long-term effects of COVID-19 are unclear. He advises everyone to be a good advocate for yourself – and wear your mask! You can watch the full conversation online at <https://youtu.be/tqQcsgX-wyU>.

After the conversation, Jerry followed up with three further pieces of advice:

1. Update your Healthcare/Financial Directive now – “not when you are in a hospital bed.”
2. Update your will or trust now.
3. Purchase an oximeter - a battery-operated finger device that gives instant reading of your pulse and blood oxygen levels. “One of the first signs of COVID is not enough oxygen in the blood. To be up walking at a natural movement pace the reading should be 90 or above. You can purchase at most drug stores or on line for around \$30...I now check mine twice a day.”

If you want to share your own COVID-19 story, you are welcome to send us an email or record a video message at <https://coviavoices.gv-one.com/?gld=1362&rld=4478>.

In non-COVID-19 related news, we learned this week that Christina Spence, San Francisco Towers' Executive Director, gave birth to a baby girl on August 9. In the midst of all the fears and confusions of this year, we're grateful for signs of new life and new beginnings. Congratulations and best wishes to the family!





## COVID-19 Update

August 21, 2020

Over the last weekend, one of our residents at Bethany Center passed away due to COVID-19. We send our heartfelt condolences to the Bethany Center community as they mourn this loss.

With the heat, fires, and smoke in the air on top of COVID-19, it has not been an easy week. The COVID-19 Task Force will include fire dangers as part of our regular review. Covia's communities, in consultation with Grant Edelstone, our Senior Director of Risk Management, are working to modify our existing plans for evacuation in case of a fire emergency to include additional infection prevention. Although our communities are not currently in danger from the wildfires throughout California, some of our team members have needed to evacuate from their homes. We encourage everyone to prepare or modify your go-bag. See page 2 of this update for guidance on what you might wish to include.

On Wednesday at the Resident Leadership Summit, representatives from our five Life Plan Communities shared their concerns about staying connected with one another during the pandemic. One solution close at hand is Covia's Well Connected program. Well Connected and Well Connected Español are phone and online communities offering activities, education, friendly conversation, and an assortment of discussion and support groups for (and most often led by) older adults. The next session starts on September 1. You can register or find out more at <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>.

On Thursday, Ron Schaefer, Covia's Chief Operating Officer, announced that our Support Services team would continue to work remotely at least until January 2021 and possibly longer, depending on what happens over the next few months. We will be working with all Support Services team members to ensure they are able to work successfully from home for the duration.

Thank you to everyone who shared a photo of yourself wearing a mask last week. And thank you for continuing to make the daily choices that will prevent the spread of COVID-19: staying home except for essential business; wearing a mask or face covering each time you go out; not going where there are large gatherings; maintaining at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others; and washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water whenever you return home. Each of these small choices can make all the difference to the lives of those around you.



## Go Bag Essentials

Prepare a bag *now* that you can grab and go in case of an emergency evacuation. Here's a list of some essential items to include:

- A complete change of clothes, including comfortable shoes.
- Copies of important paperwork, such as your driver's license, social security card, birth certificate, and marriage license.
- Insurance policy numbers and agency contact information.
- Enough of your prescription medicine to last you for 7 days.
- Record of medical conditions, allergies, and current medications, stored in a waterproof container.
- Additional eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries.
- Flashlight and batteries.
- Phone charger and back-up power for medical devices (Concentrator, CPAP, etc).
- Additional cash.
- A small first aid kit.
- Hand sanitizer and other hygiene items.
- Masks or face coverings.

In addition, make your plan now on where you would go in case of an emergency evacuation and be sure to know what your community's plans include, whether it's to shelter-in-place, meet at assembly points, or evacuate. Planning now means you will be ready – just in case!



## COVID-19 Update

August 28, 2020

In the midst of the ongoing pandemic, we are grateful that we have not also had to manage a community evacuation due to wildfires. Although the current spate of fires is beginning to come under control, we are not near the end of fire season yet and are taking further steps to prepare.

This week, our Task Force adapted an evacuation information form first developed by Spring Lake Village for use with all of our communities. If you have not yet received it, it should be available soon. In addition, Chris Ichien, our VP of Life Plan Operations, is negotiating with a hotel in Tahoe as a potential evacuation site, should the need arise.

Victor Ceron, our Senior Director of Facilities, is working with our communities to ensure our satellite phones are functioning properly and that everyone who needs to know how to use them can do so. Although we hope we will not need them, we are glad they are available, in case of emergency.

On Thursday, Covia received additional cash from the CARES Act to support our communities. These payments have been important in allowing us get additional supplies and resources to help us through this pandemic. For example, N95 masks cost more than \$3 each. This week, we placed an order for an additional 50,000 masks for our communities, particularly for Skilled Nursing with our most vulnerable residents – a purchase of close to \$200,000. Thanks to the CARES Act, we have been able to keep our communities well-supplied without adding costs to residents.

Even as we continue to defend against COVID-19 and prepare for fires or other emergencies, we also want to encourage you to get your flu shot or other necessary vaccines. Flu vaccines are available now and covered by most insurance. Covia employees can get reimbursed for their vaccine costs by submitting the expense. To find where you can get a flu shot or other vaccines, go to <https://www.vaccinefinder.org/>.

This week, Carol Silver Elliott, chair of the LeadingAge board of directors, shared some thoughts on what it means to stay strong. “Strength, to me, does not mean that you are invulnerable or invincible,” she writes. “It means that you are human, that you demonstrate your humanity, but you continue to move through—and help others to move through—this difficult journey.” You can read more of her reflection here: <https://leadingage.org/members/reflections-strength>. Thank you to everyone who is helping us move through this strange, long journey.



## COVID-19 Update

September 4, 2020

As Labor Day approaches this year, we know that people would normally want to gather and celebrate with family and friends but we can't do so. However, we can still recognize our dedicated employees' achievements and contributions to the well-being of our residents and participants even though we can't participate in the traditional social gatherings of street parades, festivals, concerts and gatherings. We can thank our staff for their hard work and pay tribute to them. If you would like to record your own video thanking them for all that they do, our COVID-19 Response and Resources has a link to help you do so [here: https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/thank-our-staff/](https://covia.org/covid-19-response-and-resources/thank-our-staff/).

While the air quality has improved and most of the active wildfires are over 50% contained, the current infection rates in our counties still restrict our activities and require that we stay safer in place. Our communities have had sporadic new employee cases of COVID-19 and we continue with significant surveillance and response-driven testing. Thank you to everyone for continuing to wear your mask, maintain your physical distance, wash your hands, and stay home except for essential travel – or travel to some of the virtual museums or tours listed below.

During this unofficial end of summer with uncertainty over the kickoff of fall sports, you may still be restless since you haven't been able to take traditional vacations. We know this is hard on everyone and encourage you this weekend to revisit all of those important self-care practices you have developed since the pandemic first started. Write down how you're feeling. Talk to a friend. Find something that makes you laugh. Meditate. Get some exercise. And most of all, please be kind to yourself. These continue to be hard times, but together we can remain socially well connected and will get through them.

Here are some suggestions for virtual tours:

Aerial America [smithsonianchannel.com/details/series/aerial-america](https://smithsonianchannel.com/details/series/aerial-america)

National Museum of African American History & Culture [nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection](https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection)

National Museum of Natural History [naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour](https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour)

National Parks [national-parks-america-virtual-tours](https://national-parks-america-virtual-tours)

The Louvre [louvre.fr/en/visites](https://louvre.fr/en/visites)

The National Women's History Museum [womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits](https://womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum [guggenheim.org/collection-online](https://guggenheim.org/collection-online)

The Vatican Museums [museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/tour](https://museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/tour)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online](https://ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online)

Virtual travel experiences explore the world [thrillist.com/travel/nation/virtual-trips](https://thrillist.com/travel/nation/virtual-trips)



## COVID-19 Update

September 11, 2020

On a difficult anniversary after a difficult week, what we most want everyone to remember today is to be kind to yourself and to one another. Please be patient as we all deal with stress and anxiety. We are bound to be at less than our best as we experience power outages and record heat and dark orange skies on top of ongoing concerns about COVID-19.

We want to offer our **reassurance** that Covia continues to be diligent in monitoring and responding to the circumstances that surround us. This week, Covia received a shipment of 50,000 N95 masks that will supply our communities for the months to come. In response to the Public Safety Power Shutoffs in Santa Rosa, Spring Lake Village was able to draw on emergency power to supply the administrative offices to the campus, reducing the need for emergency portable generators. Our Skilled Nursing Facilities are receiving new rapid test kits that we will begin using in the coming weeks as we receive further guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and in compliance with our updated Infection Control policies.

We want to express our **gratitude**: first and foremost to the Covia team members who come to work each day and continue to provide excellent care in the midst of all of the crises that surround us. To our team: please also take care of yourselves and let us know how we can support you.

We are grateful to all of the firefighters working to contain the 29 major wildfires burning across California, and are grateful that our communities remain out of harm's way at this time. We are grateful that we have not had an outbreak of COVID-19 in any of our communities. We are grateful to everyone for working to keep our communities healthy through your safe practices – covering your nose and mouth, maintaining at least six feet of distance from others, washing your hands thoroughly and regularly, getting tested on an ongoing basis, and proactively getting your flu shot. We know this is not the life we would like to live. Thank you for taking those steps that will allow us eventually to contain this virus for everyone.

And we want to share our **appreciation** to everyone who is part of Covia for continuing to hang in there, to find creative ways to connect and share, and to persevere with fortitude and grace. Thank you.

As always, you can contact the COVID-19 Task Force at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).



## COVID-19 Update

September 18, 2020

There have been a few new positive cases of COVID-19 in our communities, though they seem to be singular events rather than outbreaks. Contact tracing so far has indicated there isn't any spread. Thank you as always for taking the necessary precautions to keep COVID-19 from spreading: maintaining at least 6 feet of physical distance from others, covering your mouth and nose when outside your home, washing your hands regularly, and staying home unless you are going out for essential business.

It's been a full six months since California announced a shelter-in-place order, and people are understandably eager for opportunities to visit with others. Our communities are coming up with plans to allow in-person visits in ways that lower the risk for viral transmission, such as outdoor or window visits. The COVID-19 Task Force will be sharing guidance with our communities to help develop those plans. Some communities have plans already in place and others should be created soon. These plans vary depending on the county and the community, so please abide by your community's leadership regarding visitors.

Air quality has been a significant concern this week. We continue to be grateful for the firefighters who are working ceaselessly to get the wildfires throughout the west coast under control. We do advise both residents and staff to check each day about the air quality in your area. You may want to wear an N95 rather than a cloth mask to help filter particulates. You can reuse an N95 if it is for non-medical purposes. If you have concerns about your breathing, please talk with your health care professional.

September 13-19 is National Assisted Living Week. We want to offer special thanks to Covia's Assisted Living and Memory Care staff as well as personal duty aides and others who support our Assisted Living residents and their families.

Tonight is the start of Rosh Hashanah, the celebration of the Jewish New Year. Chaplain Meredith Cahn at St. Paul's Towers shared this reflection with her colleagues:

May the new year be better than the last.  
May we learn to live in the unknowing,  
because we don't know how long we will be in it.  
And may we use the time to envision, dream  
and work for a better world  
when we can hug,  
hold hands and see each other's faces again.



## COVID-19 Update

September 25, 2020

We commend the Lytton Gardens community for their concerted efforts in response to two positive cases of COVID-19. After the initial case came to light, the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health tested all residents and employees. Now, with the report of a second case, Lytton Gardens and Webster House are collaborating to do a second round of testing this weekend.

In analyzing how COVID-19 could have been transmitted in this community, the Task Force learned that the caregivers that work in our Affordable Communities are not required to be tested regularly. Karim Sultan, VP of Affordable Housing, along with the Housing Administrators are exploring implementing a policy that will require anyone who enters resident apartments to be tested twice a month.

This week marked the first day of Fall, which is also the start of Fall Prevention Awareness Week. Although COVID-19 is foremost in our minds, one thing that hasn't changed due to the pandemic are falls – many of which are preventable. To learn more about how you can lower your risk of falling, please visit <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-awareness-week/>.

During a recent webinar, Covia leadership gathered with prospective residents to give insight into management and operations at Covia. The webinar offered prospective residents the opportunity to ask questions about what is currently going on at Covia from a leadership perspective, including COVID-19 preparation. You can read more about their presentation on Covia's blog: <https://covia.org/news/>

CalFire reports that a Fire Weather Watch is in effect beginning Saturday morning through a large portion of Northern California for gusty winds and low humidity, bringing critical fire weather conditions. Although this is not likely to have a large impact on our communities, we will continue to monitor any updates as fire season continues.

As we hope you are aware, next week Covia is holding its semi-annual meetings for its Life Plan Communities and for employees. These will be held virtually by Zoom, with presentations for residents and employees. These meetings will offer opportunities for you to ask your questions about our COVID-19 response or other topics of concern. We hope you will attend.

For those of you observing Yom Kippur, we wish you an easy fast.





## COVID-19 Update

October 2, 2020

As you may be aware, we had to evacuate Spring Lake Village and Friends House in Santa Rosa very late last Sunday night and through the early Monday morning hours. The Glass Fire, which as of this writing is only 6% contained, came to the very edge of the Spring Lake Village campus. Both campuses are covered in ash and have sustained varying levels of smoke damage, but do not appear to have suffered structural damage. We are providing regular updates on our website at <https://covia.org/blog/fire-update/>.

We want to thank the Friends House and Spring Lake Village employees for their heroic efforts during the evacuation. Health Care Administrator Kris Hermanson shared how staff showed up in the middle of the night to assist in any way they could. "We can never thank them enough," she said. Thank you to Kris, SLV Executive Director Michael Cataldo, and FH Executive Director Clara Allen for their leadership.

The evacuation efforts were made more difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic, delaying our ability to transfer some of our residents into Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing Facilities. St. Paul's Towers was immediately able to take our most frail and vulnerable residents who arrived at 3 am on Monday morning. Due to government restrictions on emergency transfers, the last of our Assisted Living residents were finally admitted to a community on Thursday. We are relieved all of our residents are now in more established locations, and hope all will be able to return home soon.

If any Spring Lake Village or Friends House residents need to move from their current living situation, they may still move to the Residence Inn Downtown Sacramento. Currently about 80 residents are staying in rooms there, thanks to emergency arrangements made by Chris Ichien, VP of Life Plan Operations. Staff are also on site, doing wellness checks, delivering meals, and providing other support.

It is our priority to respond to the phone calls and emails we receive with questions related to the fire and evacuation. If you have questions or concerns related to the evacuation, you can reach Spring Lake Village by calling 707-538-8400 or email [info@covia.org](mailto:info@covia.org).

To support our residents through the evacuation, Well Connected, our phone- and online-based program, is in the process of setting up a daily check-in call for Spring

Lake Village and Friends House residents wherever they may be. As a reminder, Well Connected programs are available for all Covia residents and other seniors, and are an excellent resource for preventing isolation while we are safely distancing. Learn more at <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>.

This week, our Community Services division has also launched Home Match in Monterey County. Covia's home sharing program helps relieve both some of the financial pressures and social isolation exacerbated by the pandemic. You can learn more about Home Match Monterey on our blog: <https://covia.org/news/>.

If you have not yet done so, please make arrangements to get your flu shot either at your community, from your health care provider, or from a local pharmacy or other location. You can find a location near you at <https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine>.

The news that the President and First Lady have tested positive for COVID-19 is a stark reminder that status and resources are not a defense against this virus. Please be vigilant in maintaining standard precautions: wear a mask that covers your face and nose; maintain at least six feet of distance from others; avoid going out except for essential travel purposes; wash your hands and sanitize surfaces.

As a reminder, if you have questions or concerns, you can contact us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org). Stay safe.



## COVID-19 Update

October 9, 2020

We are pleased to report that Friends House residents have been able to return to their homes after being evacuated due to the Glass Fire in Santa Rosa. Residents are currently in quarantine, but glad to be home. We anticipate that Spring Lake Village residents will begin to return next week.

There is a significant logistical hurdle for the return to SLV: we have to provide COVID-19 tests for over 700 residents and staff. Executive Director Michael Cataldo and the Spring Lake Village team are working on a process to allow residents and staff to get efficiently tested when they return to the community. We are grateful for everyone's patience during this trying time.

We want to give special thanks to the team at Webster House. They have supported the Lytton Gardens community by providing three rounds of tests for residents. We are pleased to report that the first two rounds of resident testing have returned all negative results.

On Thursday, the Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, and Administration for Community Living presented a webinar on *Coronavirus Scams, Older Adults, and Financial Protection*. Additional information that may help you can be found on their websites at:

<https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus>

<http://consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus>

<https://ncler.acl.gov/ElderJustice-Toolkit/About-Elder-Justice-Toolkit.aspx>

This week, October 5-11, is Active Aging Week. Active Aging Week challenges society's diminished expectations of aging by showing that, regardless of age or health conditions, adults over 50 can live fully in all areas of life—physical, social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, vocational and environmental. Even though all of us have faced new limitations in light of this pandemic, we can find ways to express ourselves and our potential. We invite you, in honor of Active Aging Week, to explore new ways of expressing yourself, even under these very strange circumstances. If you are looking for inspiration, you may want to watch videos from Covia's Creative Aging Symposium, held in January of this year, by visiting <https://covia.org/creative-aging-symposium/>. Or visit the Active Aging Week website at [www.activeagingweek.com](http://www.activeagingweek.com) for more ideas and resources.



## COVID-19 Update

October 16, 2020

Almost all Independent Living and Assisted Living residents at Spring Lake Village and Friends House have returned home after the Glass Fire evacuation. Each resident is getting a test that allows for rapid results when they return to campus: an Abbott BinaxNOW test at Spring Lake Village, or a point-of-care (POC) antigen test at Friends House. These tests, though not perfect, allow the community to get quick results that indicate whether a person is likely to have an active case of COVID-19. So far, only one result has been suspicious and a second test was ordered. Thank you to everyone at Spring Lake Village and Friends House for continuing to follow safety guidelines during the evacuation as well as upon your return, and for complying with testing procedures that support the safety of the whole community.

Although the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply chain has not been headline news recently, we continue to work behind the scenes to ensure that all of our communities have the supplies they need. This week, we received a shipment of 100,000 disposable gloves, acquired after significant efforts. We are pleased to report that we are well-stocked on necessary PPE and will continue to make sure we have equipment available whenever it is needed.

If you have not done so, we strongly encourage you to get your flu shot in anticipation for the upcoming flu season. Please check with your community to see when they are hosting a flu shot clinic. If you aren't able to participate in one of the flu shot events at your community, please contact your health care provider to schedule a flu shot or get a shot at your local pharmacy, grocery store, or other location. You can find a provider near you at [vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org).

The last day to register to vote in California is Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Grant Edelstone, our Senior Director of Risk Management, offers guidance on voting safety during the COVID-19 pandemic and information on how staff can provide support to residents at all levels of care, giving them the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. You can watch a 7-minute interview with Grant at <https://youtu.be/rJJ5Tn7JC9w> or read our blog post at <https://covia.org/blog/voting-safely-during-covid-19/>. For more information on how to vote in California, please go to <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california>.

As always, if you would like to contact the COVID-19 Task Force with your questions or comments, you can reach us at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org). We wish you a safe and healthy weekend.



## COVID-19 Update

October 23, 2020

This week, we received encouraging news regarding the overall rate of COVID-19 infections throughout Covia to this point in time. Throughout the U.S., the infection rate for those age 65 and older is 1.74%. For California, it's at 1.45%. For our communities, the rate is just 0.67% - less than half that of the state.

These numbers are a positive indicator of the work we've done so far, but also a reminder of how important it is that we continue to be vigilant – especially as we enter the colder months and tend to stay indoors more. Being indoors makes it all the more important to wear masks or face coverings whenever you leave your home, and to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.

We're also entering cold and flu season. If you have not yet gotten your flu vaccine, we encourage you to do so soon. It can take up to two weeks for antibodies to develop after you get your shot, so the sooner you get your vaccine, the sooner you will protect yourself – and others.

We asked people throughout Covia where and why they got their flu shot. Benson Lee, Housing Administrator for Bethany Center Senior Housing in San Francisco, said, "Since I/we work with our residents almost daily, we may unwillingly expose them to the flu if we are infected. Therefore, getting the flu shot means we are lowering the risk of infecting everyone in the community, as well as our family members." Hear what other Covia team members said about their flu shots on page two of this memo.

Also as cold and flu season starts, it is all the more vital to stay home if you are sick. Please don't say, "It's just a cold." Although it might be as simple as a common cold, we would much rather people stay home than share *any* virus. Be sure to pay attention to symptoms you are experiencing, and stay on the safe side.

After last week's update, we received an email at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org) from a resident, asking if all residents should get tested for COVID-19, just as the residents returning to Spring Lake Village had. We answered that, though testing had been required for our residents to return, it actually isn't the best tool we have to prevent community spread. Any test, whether rapid or not, only provides information of infection status at the time of that test. As soon as the test is completed, a person may become infectious. That's why we ask everyone to keep following the day-to-day protocols of staying home, wearing masks, distancing, and washing hands. As the residents and staff of Spring Lake Village explain, they'll help us lock the virus out! <https://youtu.be/BuU1vAQgoal>

## Where and why Covia leaders got their flu shot

**Chris Dana**, VP of Information Technology: “I got my flu shot at my primary care physician’s office. They have a special queue setup just for that purpose. I get it every year and I haven’t had the flu since 1946.”

**Christina Spence**, Executive Director, San Francisco Towers: “I went to CVS with my family since our doctor’s office did not have a supply of the flu shot. We scheduled ahead online and we were in and out in half an hour. This is an especially important year to get vaccinated, due to the pandemic and the fact that our baby is too young to receive her own flu shot. We did this to protect others who are more vulnerable as well as ourselves.”

**Christopher Ichien**, VP of Life Plan Operations: “Stephanie, three boys and I received ours at the San Jose Kaiser drive through. It was safe, easy and no tears were shed.”

**Clara Allen**, Executive Director at Friends House: “I got mine by a nurse at Friends House. I got to select a candy bar afterward. I chose Almond Joy!”

**David Dolan**, Housing Administrator, Presidio Gate Apartments: “I received my flu shot at the Kaiser USF San Francisco location. I am a firm believer in preventive care.”

**Grant Edelstone**, Senior Director of Risk Management: “I received mine at CVS. I wanted to reduce the likelihood of getting flu illnesses, having doctors’ visits, and missing work due to flu, as well as protect my family.”

**Karim Sultan**, VP of Affordable Housing: “I went today to a drive in station at USF. Super quick and easy.”

**Laura Darling**, VP of Communications: “I went to a free drive-through flu shot clinic hosted by my county’s Public Health Department. Everyone was so great! I get the flu shot so that I don’t have to worry about getting sick – or getting other people sick.”

**Mary McMullin**, Chief Strategy and Advancement Officer: “I was able to get my flu shot at the Front Porch Home Office. Unexpectedly, I was here the day of their clinic and they had 2 extra doses and offered one for me. I believe I have a responsibility to get the shot to maintain my health and try to defend against flu. I do not want to spread any disease unnecessarily.”

**Prab Brinton**, VP of Human Resources: “I’m going this weekend to the Kaiser drive thru clinic. I get the flu shot because I make a horrible sick person - so anything I can do save my family from ‘sick Prab’. ☺ In all seriousness, I get the flu shot to protect myself from the seasonal flu.”

**Tracy Powell**, VP of Community Services: “Getting mine Friday at Kaiser!! (Along with shingles vaccine!!!!) Doing it to reduce risk—especially during COVID times—as well as keep family safe!!!”

**Victor Ceron**, Senior Director of Facilities Services: “I went to a drive through service at Kaiser for the flu shot.”



## COVID-19 Update

October 30, 2020

This week, we received updated guidance from the California Department of Public Health on visiting regulations for Skilled Nursing. All visitor policies depend upon your county's risk level, as set forth by the tiers in the California Blueprint for a Safer Economy. As the COVID Task Force develops guidance for our communities on applying this guidance, we find ourselves constantly torn between two positive objectives: providing social connection and preventing the spread of infection. It's a difficult balance, and we appreciate your patience as we calibrate our response, even as county positivity rates fluctuate and regulatory requirements change.

It is likely that we will continue to be pulled between these two objectives until there is a vaccine available. To that end, each community has registered to be on a list for a national vaccine distribution, once one becomes available. We do not anticipate that a vaccine will be available until 2021 at the earliest, but want to be in the best position for our residents to receive one once it has been developed, tested, and approved for use.

Our Skilled Nursing Facilities are also registering to be part of a National Nursing Home COVID-19 Action Network. The AHRQ ECHO National Nursing Home COVID-19 Action Network aims to rapidly assist nursing homes in consistently implementing evidence-based best practices to protect residents and staff. Webster House, along with its medical director Dr. Marina Martin, will be partnering with Stanford Medical Center to provide additional training for team members. In other Skilled Nursing news, we want to congratulate all of Covia's Skilled Nursing Facilities for making U.S. News and World Report's list of High Performing nursing facilities. Congratulations!

Last Friday, the family caregiver of a resident at Shires Memorial, Covia's Affordable Community in San Jose, tested positive for COVID-19. The caregiver and resident (who also tested positive) were immediately able to self-isolate as Shires staff delivered meals and other support. We were able to discover these cases due to the testing policy put in place for caregivers at our Affordable Communities. We're grateful that this policy allowed us to prevent potential spread in the building and possibly the greater community.

Do you have your mask ready for Halloween? Of course we encourage covering your mouth and nose every time you go out, but since it is the season, why not make your mask festive? Send us a picture of your Halloween mask at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org), and see some of the Halloween festivities already posted on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CoviaCommunities/>! We hope you have a great weekend with no tricks, just treats – and an extra hour for good measure. Don't forget to turn your clocks back!





## COVID-19 Update

November 6, 2020

As of this writing, we have not yet heard the full results of Tuesday's presidential election, in part because some states are still counting mailed in ballots. We're grateful that during this time when in-person contact may be significantly more dangerous than many of us were able to use the option to mail in our ballots and have our votes count.

This week, Covia received some funds from Health and Human Services as an incentive payment due to our communities having a lower rate of infection than their surrounding counties. These CARES Act funds help us provide support and supplies to our staff, and to continue to keep our infection rates low.

Our team at Support Services continues primarily to work remotely, though some employees do come to the Walnut Creek office for essential business purposes on occasion. Starting Monday, anyone coming to the Support Services office will use an online screening app, developed by our IT department. The app prompts employees to screen for symptoms and other COVID-19 indicators, helping them determine whether or not they should come to the office. While in the office, employees and visitors observe other safety measures, such as wearing a mask and maintaining at least six feet of distance at all times. No more than 18 people can be in the office at one time.

With Thanksgiving approaching, we have created some guidelines and suggestions for celebrating Thanksgiving safely as a reference document for anyone. We've shared this as an additional PDF accompanying this week's update. It is also posted online at <https://covia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Thanksgiving-Guidelines.pdf>. You are welcome to pass this on to anyone who might find it useful.

Although Thanksgiving may not be the same, we do want to learn what you're thankful for in this difficult year. It has been a Covia tradition to share photos and statements from residents and staff on Facebook around Thanksgiving. If you want to share your gratitude to be included in the Thanksgiving post, please send a photo of yourself and statement to Kate Vermillion, Digital and Social Media Manager, at [kvermillion@covia.org](mailto:kvermillion@covia.org). We'd love to get them too at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

As we commemorate Veterans' Day this coming Wednesday, we want to thank all who have served in our armed forces. We honor you for your service and your sacrifices. Thank you in addition to all of those serving on the front lines of our current fight against COVID-19. We see you, and we know how you are working each day to keep people safe. Thank you to all of our heroes, in whatever uniform you wear.





## COVID-19 Update

November 13, 2020

It's Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> and the number of COVID-19 cases is rising. Although we have been fortunate in keeping the number of cases in our communities low, we encourage you to continue in the practices that have helped all of us so far:

- Stay home, except for essential business.
- If you go out, wear a mask or cloth face covering that completely covers your nose and mouth.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from others outside of your household.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.

We want to stress the importance of staying home – even for Thanksgiving. Although we know everyone is eager to see loved ones, we **strongly discourage** anyone – residents or staff – from in-person celebrations this year beyond your immediate household. The risk of spreading COVID is simply too great.

Mary Linde, Executive Director of St. Paul's Towers, shared her thoughts about whether or not to travel to visit family in a video interview. Although a family emergency required her to travel, her advice is "Don't do it." Instead, she says, "We have to stay the course. There will be Thanksgiving next year and the year after. Treat this as the public health crisis as it is." You can watch the full interview here: <https://youtu.be/ljOUMelgCws>

This week, LeadingAge, an organization that provides education, advocacy, and applied research for non-profit aging services such as Covia, shared its Pandemic Playbook at <https://playbook.leadingage.org/>. The Playbook was compiled to "help ensure that aging services providers can prepare for and mitigate the impact of a pandemic by applying what has been learned this year." Chapters include Management and Crisis Intervention; Clinical Impact and Infection Prevention; and Financial Impact and Strategies. It also includes references to Covia, such as how our Well Connected program prevents social isolation, and our interview with Jerry W. Brown sharing his first person experience with COVID-19.

This week and next is also LeadingAge's annual meeting. Every year, LeadingAge bestows the Award of Honor on someone who shows vision, mission, compassion, and courage every day of the year. This year, Katie Smith Sloan, President and CEO of LeadingAge, presented the award to every member of LeadingAge. "Every CNA, housekeeper, service coordinator, dining server, cook, nurse, therapist, dishwasher, social worker, and every administrator, manager, and receptionist. **Everyone**. Your dedication keeps people thriving, families together, and communities intact. Thank you for everything you have done, and continue to do, in the face of incredible adversity. You truly deserve this award. Congratulations!" Watch the video honoring you, LeadingAge's Award of Honor recipients, at <https://leadingage.org/2020-leadingage-award-honor>.



## COVID-19 Update

November 20, 2020

Shortly after last week's update, we learned that California is the second state to reach the milestone of over 1 million residents diagnosed with COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. As community spread rises, 41 counties statewide, representing 94% of the population, are now in the Purple range (widespread transmission), and the test positivity rate is over 5%. And as of tomorrow, a new statewide nighttime curfew for non-essential activities will take effect.

We don't want to be alarmist, but these are the facts. It is for this reason that we continue to **strongly urge everyone** – residents and staff – not to gather with people outside of your household for Thanksgiving this year. As Mary Linde shared in her recent memo to St. Paul's Towers, "A Zoom Thanksgiving is better than an ICU Christmas" - or Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, or New Year.

We do hope that you will enjoy the holiday with people who live in your household and we encourage you to find creative and remote ways to celebrate with other people you care about. Although it's disappointing not to gather for the holidays, staying home will help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

If you are feeling tempted or pressured to participate in a family gathering, here are some ways to explain to the people you care about why you are choosing not to participate in your typical holiday traditions this year:

- I wish this virus would take holidays off, but since it won't, I won't be able to join our extended family for our celebration this year.
- As much as I will miss being part of our family celebration, it is important both for me and for my community/the people I work with to stay home this year.
- Although it's been a long time since we've seen each other, it's important for all of us to continue to do what we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Let's figure out a way to do something special together, even if we can't be together in person.

If you're feeling family pressure, please know that you are not alone. Ron Schaefer, our Chief Operating Officer, and Karim Sultan, our VP of Affordable Housing, who are both members of the COVID-19 Task Force, also had to explain to their families why they couldn't come home this year.

In positive news, a second potential COVID-19 vaccine was announced this week. Although the coming winter months are going to be hard, we do see a glimmer of light at the end of this tunnel. Stay the course! We can and will get through this together.



November 25, 2020

All of us on Covia's COVID-19 Task Force wanted to give you our thanks this week.

Thank you to our residents who make buildings into communities and fill them with vitality, engagement, and wisdom. We are honored to be part of your lives. You have no idea how much we miss spending time with you in person.

Thank you to the Covia team. You show up every day, going above and beyond to take excellent care of our residents, program participants, and each other. You truly make Covia a great place to work.

Thank you to the teams at each of our communities: Spring Lake Village, Jennings Court, Friends House, San Francisco Towers, Presidio Gate Apartments, Bethany Center, Fellowship Manor, Oak Center Towers, St. Paul's Towers, Shires Memorial Center, Lytton Gardens, Webster House, Webster House Health Center, and (last but certainly not least) Canterbury Woods. Thank you to our Resident Service Coordinators throughout California, to our Community Services team who reach people nationwide, and of course to our Support Services team, keeping things running from your home offices, wherever you live.

Thank you also to those who work in our communities to prepare food, maintain gardens, provide personal assistance to the most vulnerable, and so much more. Thank you to our vendor partners who support the work of the Covia Foundation, our Affordable Communities and our Community Services programs. Your generosity inspires us.

Thank you to all of our donors who have contributed volunteer time, gifts of PPE or other goods, or financial gifts, large and small. Thank you to the individual donors, the Circle of Friends who ensure that our residents may spend their days amongst their friends and neighbors. Thank you to our institutional donors whose support of our Community Services programs makes an impact far beyond our doors.

Thank you to all of you for living out Covia's guiding principles of respecting one another, embracing individuality, and serving with integrity. Thank you for staying strong and connected throughout this long and difficult year. Most of all, thank you for taking care of one another. We could not do this without you.

Happy Thanksgiving.



## COVID-19 Update

December 4, 2020

With the surge in cases still building after Thanksgiving, we urge you to take extra precautions over the next couple of weeks. It's a good idea to assume that everyone – including yourself – is positive for COVID-19 and to act accordingly in order to prevent any possible spread of infection.

Stay home as much as possible. When you are out, wear your mask, even if you are physically distant from others. Remember to wash your hands for a full 20 seconds as we all learned to do way back when the pandemic first started. Screen yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 – and don't write them off as allergies or "just a cough."

If you traveled or gathered with others for the holidays, get tested, even if you do not have symptoms. Since many people are asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19, we strongly advise you to get tested for COVID-19 in 4-7 days after your return, even without any symptoms.

We've seen an increase in cases across Covia since our last update. Two residents and one staff member at Webster House, two staff members at San Francisco Towers, and one staff member each at Canterbury Woods and St. Paul's Towers have tested positive. Because Monterey County has a positivity rate over 10%, staff at Canterbury Woods are now being tested twice a week. Thank you to all those who are working hard to keep people safe, but we need everyone to contribute. Something as simple as wearing a cloth face covering any time you leave your household can make a difference.

Last week, we placed a major order for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies started arriving this week. The gloves, face masks, and face shields that we ordered should be enough to supply our communities for the next six months.

We have started to get some questions about how the COVID-19 vaccine will be administered at our communities, once a vaccine is approved by the FDA. That largely depends upon what the state decides. We will share information once we have more news. In the meantime, LeadingAge has an FAQ about the COVID-19 vaccine here: <https://www.leadingage.org/sites/default/files/FAQs%20and%20Resources%20on%20COVID-19%20Vaccines%20.pdf>.

Although you can't get a COVID-19 vaccine yet, you can still get your flu shot. And what better time than National Influenza Vaccine Week, December 6-12! It's a December holiday we should all observe. Stay safe!



## COVID-19 Update

December 11, 2020

We have some good news and some bad news.

The bad news is that the surge in COVID-19 cases has hit our communities. As of this writing, 14 residents and 2 team members at Webster House Health Center are positive. Canterbury Woods has 6 residents and 2 team members, San Francisco Towers has 3 team members, Lytton Gardens has 2 team members, Spring Lake Village has 1 resident and 2 team members, St. Paul's Towers has 1 team member, Webster House (IL) has 1 team member, and Friends House has 1 resident who are positive for COVID-19. With cases still emerging from the Thanksgiving holiday, we expect those number to increase, though we are doing everything we can to keep them contained.

**We need your help.** We know you're tired of hearing it and you're tired of feeling trapped at home. We would like nothing better than to give everyone a much needed break. But in order to contain this virus, we need everyone to do what is in your power to do.

One piece of good news is that there is a lot that is in your power. It may not feel like much, but taking precautions of staying at home as much as possible, wearing a mask or face covering *properly* any time you leave your home (even if you're just going down the hall of your building), not gathering in person with anyone outside your household (or maintaining *at least* 6 feet of distance from others *while masked* if you do) – all of these things are under your control.

Additionally, in consultation with the COVID-19 Task Force, the Human Resources department has updated our travel policies and practices for team members, based on the latest CDC Travel Advisory and California's Stay at Home orders. All Covia team members will need to review and sign this document as part of our overall precautions for everyone's health and safety.

On Tuesday, Kevin Gerber, Covia's president and CEO, talked with the Expanded Leadership team about how this is a marathon, not a sprint. An avid runner himself, Kevin said it feels like we're at about mile 18, which sounds about right to us. There's still a long way to go. We know you didn't sign up for this marathon, most of us never

trained for it, and a lot of us don't even like running, and yet we have made it this far. Let us continue to run the race.

One thing that may help us reach the finish line is the COVID-19 vaccine. Yesterday, the FDA's vaccine advisory panel recommended that the agency grant an emergency use authorization to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. LeadingAge posted an interview with Ruth Link Gelles, Doctoral Epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who shared, "If the process moves forward as anticipated, the FDA will meet Thursday; the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will meet Friday; the FDA will issue the EUA on Saturday and ACIP would vote Sunday or Monday. Vaccinations would then begin the week of December 14<sup>th</sup>. The Moderna vaccine is scheduled for review beginning December 17. The Pharmacy Partnership could be activated beginning December 21, depending on what each state prioritizes." You can read the full interview here: <https://leadingage.org/regulation/whats-latest-vaccine-interview-cdcs-ruth-link-gelles>

All of Covia's communities have signed up to be part of the Pharmacy Partnership and are working with either CVS or Walgreens to have them hold immunization clinics as soon as they have a vaccine to administer. Our understanding is that the priority for vaccination will be our Skilled Nursing, Memory Care and Assisted Living residents along with our staff. But all of this depends on what California and the local health departments determine regarding who will receive the vaccine and how they direct CVS and Walgreens for this first round. We will provide more information as soon as it is available.

We know people have concerns about the approval process and the vaccine's safety. The best resource we've found comes from the Society for Post-Acute and Long Term Care Medicine, which we have posted on our website here: <https://covia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/QA-about-the-COVID-19-Vaccine-AMDA.pdf>. It answers questions such as:

1. How is a vaccine developed and tested?
2. What are the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements for the safety and efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine?
3. How will we know it is safe?

This has been a very long update, but we wanted to end with another piece of good news. Yesterday, it was announced that Covia is one of the Best Workplaces in Aging Services, as rated by Great Place to Work and Fortune magazine! After compiling the feedback from 94% of our team members, Covia ranked #17, our highest rating ever. You can read more about this honor on our blog, along with news about the recognition we've received from U.S. News and World Report and the Brandon Hall Group, at <https://covia.org/news/>. Thank you to everyone who makes Covia a Great Place to Work.

Last but not least, happy Chanukah! May we all be sustained to shine our light in the darkness.





## COVID-19 Update

December 18, 2020

We have a holiday request: if you have made any plans to travel or to visit friends or family for Christmas or New Years, please follow California's safer-at-home orders and cancel them. And if you've already made plans to stay home, thank you! Doing everything you can to stay safe and to keep from spreading COVID-19 is the best gift you can give EVERYONE this year.

To help us process the grief of what we have lost in 2020, the chaplains from both Front Porch and Covia are collaborating on a Memorial for a Lost Year, taking place next Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 pm. Residents and staff are all welcome. The attached flyer has details on how to join by Zoom.

Our communities are doing valiant work to contain COVID-19. Some have managed to decrease the number of cases, while others have increased slightly. Due to the number of cases statewide, it now often takes 5 to 7 days to get lab test results. With the positivity rate in Alameda and Monterey Counties now over 10%, our staff in Skilled Nursing there need to get tested twice a week.

Chris Ichien, VP of Life Plan Operations, has been working with our Executive Directors to create a special Covia COVID Unit. This unit will provide care for residents who test positive for COVID-19 and need skilled nursing care, as well as address staffing pressures experienced by our individual communities. We anticipate opening the unit on January 19<sup>th</sup>. More details are coming soon.

We are more hopeful about the year to come as the Pfizer vaccine begins to be distributed, with the Moderna vaccine likely not far behind. Some of our communities have been contacted by their pharmacy partners, though we have not yet gotten a date for any vaccine clinics in our communities yet.

Dr. Timothy Gieseke, who served as the Medical Director at Spring Lake Village for over 30 years, provided his insights on the vaccine in our recent blog post. He says, "I think it's effective and safe and it's something that when your turn comes I would be, 'I'm gonna be the first in line,' quite frankly." You can read the full blog post at <https://covia.org/blog/dr-timothy-gieseke-provides-perspective-on-covid-19-vaccines/> or watch the 30 minute interview he gave with Laura Darling, VP of Communications, on our YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/AslzmPtbs>.

As the post says, "Although the vaccine is good news, for right now his guidance is, 'mask as much as you can. That's kind of where you live at this point in time.' But, Dr. Gieseke assures us, 'this too will pass.'" Hold onto that hope!

# **Memorial for a Lost Year**

Join the chaplains from Covia and Front Porch  
for a chance to share, to grieve, and to hope.

**December 21 at 1:30 pm**



Join the Zoom Meeting  
<https://esc.zoom.us/j/93612916162>  
1 669 900 6833  
Meeting ID: 936 1291 6162



**covia**







## COVID-19 Update

December 24, 2020

*Due to the holidays, the Weekly Update will be distributed on Thursday this week and next.*

After seeing the surge that happened after Thanksgiving, we hope it is clear that gathering with others will only make life in 2021 more difficult. Once again, we earnestly request that you follow the guidelines set forth by the state and stay home for the holidays this year.

At the same time, we want to honor and recognize the many people on the Covia team who will be working on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and the weekends around them. Thank you for all you do to make the holidays special – and safe – for our residents.

On Monday, the chaplains from Front Porch and Covia hosted a Memorial for a Lost Year, attended by over 100 residents and staff. The recorded service is available on your resident website or CoviaNet. Meredith Cahn, the chaplain at St. Paul's Towers, led the service while herself in self-isolation at home due to a possible COVID-19 exposure. Read what she had to share with her colleagues on page 2 of this update.

We learned this week that scammers are already trying to take advantage of the new COVID-19 vaccines. Medicare is alerting people to some of the scams popping up:

If anyone asks you to share your Medicare Number or pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

**Here's what to know:**

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

In addition, Medicare covers the cost of the COVID-19 vaccine.

So far, none of our communities have received a date for a vaccine clinic. Some of our communities have begun distributing Informed Consent forms from Walgreens, which will need to be filled out, scanned, and returned to the pharmacy prior to the clinic date. We eagerly await the administration of the first vaccinations at Covia, and in the meantime, we wish you a safe and happy holiday!

## Tea for the Soul

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Hi Everyone,

This quarantining from everyone including my husband and my baby grandchild (who has learned to laugh in my absence! I'm thrilled and heartbroken at the same time), sitting in my bedroom with a bed, a rocking chair, two cats (and a view of my beautiful garden), has made me more aware of what our residents deal with. I have food brought to my (outside) door... I can glimpse my family... and I still seem to be on zoom all day with residents or staff...And thank God for the cats--who are thrilled to have me to themselves.

But it's made me appreciate all that I do have. A job I love, coworkers who care about each other and the residents, who (as residents said to me today) go above and beyond to help them. Having meaning and purpose in my life – and a good husband, delightful daughter – and oh, the grandson... My beloved cats. Enough to eat. A beautiful garden. Clean air at present. Beautiful skies. A roof over my head without fear of eviction. Clothes. Friends, good friends who are there for me through joy and sorrow. A car that can get me to work and play. Instacart. Other essential workers who risk their lives for others. Health insurance. So many things. And the days are getting longer!! Zoom and facetime. The telephone. Constantly improving hearing aids (I've been wearing them since 1979) that now link to my iPhone. Health.

Someone had me list all the stressors in my life recently – so that I might practice a little self-care, and there are a lot. But I realized that counting my blessings is much more healing than making sure I'm aware of how many stressors I'm dealing with. And my favorite self-care technique is to help someone who is worse off than I am...

This was probably WAY too much information for you – and I apologize. (Aren't you glad I didn't spell out the stressors?) But I wanted to share my list of blessings or gratitudes – and offer you the opportunity to share yours.

Being aware of the good things in our lives allows us to adjust our attitude – contemplate different needs. Indeed, a sage once asked, "Who is happy? The one who is satisfied with what they have."

May we be satisfied with what we have. Today I am.

Peace to you all.

And love.

And appreciation.

Meredith



## COVID-19 Update

December 31, 2020

*Due to the holidays, the Weekly Update will be distributed on Thursday this week.*

We're happy to report that a handful of our Covia team have received the first of their COVID-19 vaccinations this week. Santa Clara County provided an opportunity for health care staff to sign up for the vaccination, administered at the Fairgrounds in San Jose. More than 35 Webster House employees participated. Linda Hibbs, Executive Director at Webster House, received her first shot on Tuesday and reports "no side effects." She and the other staff will return for the second shot in three weeks.

Most vaccinations will take place at clinics hosted by our pharmacy partners on site in our communities. Residents and staff in our Skilled Nursing will be in the first round with others to follow soon after. Some of our communities have received the dates for their clinics, starting in January. Your community Executive Director or Housing Administrator will share the details as soon as they are available.

Thank you to everyone who has made the choice not to travel or gather with others at Christmas; we ask that you make that choice once again for New Years. Anyone who got exposed at Christmas will likely be at their most infectious around New Year's Eve, so, in everyone's best interest, please party like it's 2020 and just stay home.

If you're looking for ways to stay connected in 2021, we encourage everyone to take a look at the impressive new catalogs from Well Connected and Well Connected Español. The Winter Session starts on January 1 and includes programs such as Museums at Home, a daily Gratitude group, line dancing, Boggle, and Coping with COVID Stress, among many others. You can find the catalogs on the Covia website at <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>.

Although we may believe that this is a year we will never forget, the chances are that our memories will fade as time passes. We would love to hear some of your memories – good and bad – from this remarkable and bewildering year while they are still vivid. Please send us your reflections at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org).

We know we have some distance to go to get out of this pandemic, but we are hopeful that in the coming year, we will be able to meet, to gather, and to celebrate, thanks to all of our hard work and perseverance this year. Here's to good things to come in 2021! Happy New Year!



## COVID-19 Update

January 8, 2021

The new year is under way, and many of our communities now have their first COVID-19 vaccine clinic scheduled for this month. At San Francisco Towers, the first clinic takes place next Tuesday and will include staff, vendors, and residents at all levels of care. A whopping 97% of residents have opted to participate. Executive Director Christina Spence says, “It will be ‘all hands on deck’ to make sure we have people prepped and ready when it’s their turn” – including some of our Support Services team who will be on site to support the process. LeadingAge California may also be there to talk to residents and staff about the vaccination experience.

We look forward to taking this next step towards getting us out of this pandemic, but the vaccine is only one part of this process. We still need everyone to take all the standard precautions: only go out for essential travel purposes; wear a mask that fully covers your nose and mouth when you leave your home or when someone who is not part of your household is around you and also maintain a distance of six feet or more between yourself and others who aren’t in your household; and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. All of these precautions used together will help keep you and others from contracting or spreading the COVID-19 virus.

We encourage you to find creative ways to keep yourself well as we head into what we hope is the final phase of this pandemic. After we asked for your memories from 2020, we heard from several people who shared many things you’ve done to take care of yourselves including writing, knitting, meditating, baking, Qi Gong, and more. We invite everyone to explore your creative side this year by registering for the fourth annual Creative Aging Symposium on January 28<sup>th</sup> – in English and Spanish. Learn more about this event on our blog here: <https://covia.org/blog/fourth-annual-creative-aging-symposium-celebrates-identity/>.

We also received this email from Dee Ann Hyatt, Director of Human Resources at Spring Lake Village: “My greatest take away from this year is how amazing the staff at Spring Lake Village are. Through COVID & fires everyone always ‘showed up’. We don’t back away from a challenge and are dedicated to our residents 110%. It has not been easy but our amazing staff and contract partners continue to show up, every day, working with each other to get things done. We are hopeful that the worst is behind us but know that whatever we have going on, our staff does not give up!!! Heroes REALLY DO work here!”

Whether at Spring Lake Village or any other community, we could not agree more! Thank you, one and all.



## COVID-19 Update

January 15, 2021

It has been an eventful week on many fronts, but we are primarily excited to report about the vaccine clinics that took place at six of our communities this week, with three more scheduled for next week. Mary Linde, Executive Director of St. Paul's Towers, reports that 100% of residents and 65% of staff, including vendors, signed up to get vaccinated. (Other staff had been vaccinated elsewhere, so that percentage is actually higher.) At Canterbury Woods, 180 residents and staff received the vaccine. And at San Francisco Towers, more than 550 residents and staff were vaccinated. As resident Ann Stone shared with KGO television, "It's a relief to know that at some point we're going to be able at least to go down and have dinner together," and Peter Dunckel said, "It was absolutely painless, perfect, and no after-effects whatsoever."

While we are thrilled at this good news and the progress begun made, we are also aware that we are not out of the woods yet. This week, we learned that the mother of Benson Lee, our Housing Administrator at Bethany Center in San Francisco, died after contracting COVID-19 in her Assisted Living community. Karim Sultan, our VP of Affordable Housing, wrote, "We lost Benson's mother last week after a wonderful long life of 92 years. Her passing was the result of contracting COVID-19. Unfortunately it looks as if almost every resident in her Assisted Living community has been infected with COVID-19. We have not seen that amount of community spread in our communities yet. I believe that the efforts that we have initiated have been effective in mitigating that level of spread. It is important that we redouble our efforts as we enter this period where vaccinations are starting to roll out. Having a relatively small amount of vaccine in the community will do nothing in the short term to mitigate new cases, hospitalizations and deaths. We are just crossing second base and headed to third. It is not the time to let our guard down! Let's keep fighting the good fight!!!"

On Monday we celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr., though the date of his birth is actually today. In one of his sermons, he said, "Let us be concerned about others because we are dependent on others." If we're being honest, Independent Living is not possible for any of us. Dr. King was keenly aware of the importance of community because he knew that we are "in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." If COVID-19 has done nothing else, it has made this truth abundantly clear. Please continue to show your concern about one another and stay safe, knowing that what we do has the power to affect so many others. And may we be inspired to carry on Martin Luther King Jr.'s work of building the beloved community.



## 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!



## COVID-19 Update

January 29, 2021

There's more encouraging news this week with over 600 people getting the COVID-19 vaccine at Spring Lake Village's first clinic. Today, Oak Center Towers is hosting its first clinic, and next week will be the second clinic for three communities. Christina Spence, the Executive Director at San Francisco Towers, reports that they will be able to open the gym and offer in-person dining for the first time in months soon after the second clinic. (The vaccine isn't fully effective until about two weeks after the second shot.)

We've received questions about whether we will require employees to receive the vaccine. Although we strongly encourage our employees to get vaccinated (and most employees are choosing to do so), it is not a requirement, just as it is not a requirement for residents. However, employees who do not get vaccinated may be required to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE), do additional screening or ongoing testing, or even take on different roles to protect others.

Earlier this week, Governor Gavin Newsom lifted the Regional Stay-at-Home order for California. Although this is a positive sign, it may be misleading since the statewide Stay Home order established last March is still in place and California is still experiencing widespread transmission of COVID-19.

You know what this means: stay home unless you are going out on essential business. Wear a mask whenever you are outside your home or with someone outside of your immediate household. Keep a distance of six feet or more from others. Wash your hands frequently. We know this reminder has gotten old, but please keep up these practices as we inch closer towards the end of this pandemic - this will end!

We are grateful for how you have been able to carry on throughout this ordeal. At the Creative Aging Symposium this week, Katie Wade, Director of Social Call, Ruth's Table, and Creative Spark, shared this quote from *Creative Care* by Anne Basting: "I am a firm believer that 'little c' creativity permeates the lives of all human beings, no matter how many times they might have been told that they are not creative. Whenever a person faces an unexpected obstacle, finding the way through (around, under, or over) a given challenge demands a novel solution and an adaptation in the person's routine."

We've all had to be extremely creative this year. We invite you to see other expressions of creativity from the pandemic at Ruth's Table's exhibition *Enduring Inspiration: Creativity at Home*, a series of community art exhibitions that highlight artworks created during shelter-in-place. The grand opening takes place next Thursday at 1:00. You can get a preview here: <https://www.ruthstable.org/enduring-inspiration-exhibition>.





## COVID-19 Update

February 5, 2021

February is Black History Month, and as our communities continue our vaccine clinics, we want to recognize Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, an immunologist at the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Dr. Anthony Fauci credits Corbett, saying, "The vaccine you are going to be taking was developed by an African American woman and that is just a fact." Dr. Corbett is part of a long tradition of African American scientists who have provided medical innovations that help us all, such as Dr. Charles Drew who created the first blood bank; Dr. Otis Boykin who invented the control unit for pacemakers; and Dr. Patricia Bath who invented the laser-phaco probe, a tool that revolutionized cataract surgery.

Vaccine clinics continue, and all of our communities except Shires Memorial Center in San Jose have had at least one clinic. This week, San Francisco Towers vaccinated 679 people over two days at their second clinic. Executive Director Christina Spence reports, "Walgreens reps told us that out of all of the 'big sites' in SF, we were tops, and they shared some of our practices with other sites and even sent several of their own team members to observe and be vaccinated themselves at our clinic." Well done!

Collaboration is key as we work together to get as many people vaccinated as possible. Mary Linde, Executive Director at St. Paul's Towers who is also an RN, will be going to Friends House's clinic next Monday to ensure they have a nurse on site.

We are also pleased to be building connections with Front Porch's COVID-19 Task Force. Calais Anguiano, the Administrator at Fredericka Manor Care Center in Chula Vista, Front Porch's largest Skilled Nursing Facility, will be joining our Task Force meetings to provide us with insight from Front Porch's practices.

Some people have asked us what the next steps are after residents and staff have received their second vaccine. The decisions on what can and cannot be done are not up to us, but to State and County Health Departments, the Department of Social Services, and the CDC. Please check with your ED or administrator to learn what changes will be happening at your community. And remember that the vaccine is not fully effective until two weeks after your second dose.

This Sunday is the Super Bowl, and when it comes to football, our favorite position is safety. One thing we don't want to do is fumble this late in the game. We hope you enjoy the Super Bowl from the comfort of home, but please wait until next year to have a party. And thank you to everyone for being part of this amazing team.





## COVID-19 Update

February 12, 2021

This week, Ron Schaefer, Covia's Chief Operating Officer, shared an encouraging update with the Covia Communities board on our COVID-19 status. At this moment, there are no positive cases among our residents, and over 80% of both our residents and front line staff have received at least one vaccination, with greater participation expected as clinics continue. We are starting to reach out to our Support Services and Community Services teams about getting vaccinated as doses become available. Overall, we are seeing signs of hope. In the meantime, please continue to follow health and safety guidelines to protect yourself and one another.

As another Ash Wednesday approaches, it feels like it's been the longest Lent ever. But as we celebrate Valentine's Day on Sunday, we invite you to join LeadingAge in sharing how #CareIsLove. We would love to hear from you about how people in your communities or programs have shown their love and care. You can email us at [c19info@covia.org](mailto:c19info@covia.org).

Special thanks to the Spring Lake Village team who will be hosting their second vaccine clinic on Valentine's Day and on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> – on what should have been a 3-day weekend! We appreciate the extra work you are putting in to make sure all of your community can be safe, and hope you will take a break in your schedule soon.

LeadingAge is also encouraging people to contact your senators to support key provisions as they work on the comprehensive COVID-19 relief bill. These provisions include funding for provider relief, affordable housing programs and services, Wi-Fi access to combat loneliness and isolation, and options and funding increases for reimbursement of care during the pandemic. If you want to send an email to your officials with one click, go to <https://mobilize4change.org/V5gzhk0>.

Semi-annuals start next week, and once again the meetings will be taking place remotely, due to the pandemic. Among other topics, Diana Jamison, our Chief Financial Officer, will explain how Covia has managed COVID-19 expenses as well as how the pandemic has affected revenue, and how we are budgeting for additional COVID-19 expenses in the coming year.

It's also the Lunar New Year celebration. It was not the year we expected, but all of us on the COVID-19 task force are proud of the work we have done as an organization to support each other and to address all of the issues we have had to face over the past 12 months. We wish you great happiness and prosperity in the new year! 恭喜發財!



## COVID-19 Update

February 19, 2021

Statewide, COVID-19 numbers are improving. At Covia, vaccination clinics continue, with over 98% of residents in our Life Plan and multi-level communities having received at least one dose. As of Thursday, just over 65% of residents in our Affordable Communities had received one dose, but that number is increasing daily. Today, residents of Shires Memorial Center in San Jose, the only community that has not had a clinic on their campus, were transported to Lytton Gardens in Palo Alto to join their clinic. Once again, we are grateful to be part of a collaborative organization that works together to support one another.

We are continuing to learn how we can operate once our communities are fully vaccinated. On Wednesday the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) discussed “Next Steps After Vaccination” and what *might* change after vaccinations:

- Surveillance Testing
- Activities
- Dining
- Family visits

This will still depend upon your local health department based on the rate of transmission in your county. Your ED or Housing Administrator will be implementing those changes, based on local guidance.

Surveillance testing still has an important role to play. Last Friday, Max Brodsky, the Health Care Administrator at San Francisco Towers, reported that an employee tested positive eight days after receiving the second dose. The infected individual reported no symptoms, suggesting the vaccine was working as promised to reduce the severity of COVID. We are still unsure if a vaccinated person can spread the virus to others, which is why, as Max shared with the community, “This case is a reminder that time to relax is not now. We must continue following strict protocols for social distancing, mask wearing, hand hygiene, and routine screening. Continue being vigilant and cautious.”

As we approach the one year mark of sending these weekly updates, we would love your reflections on the year we have had. Please share your thoughts at [C19info@covia.org](mailto:C19info@covia.org). We are also happy to share the Social Accountability Report for 2020, now available online at <https://covia.org/social-accountability/>. Highlighting *Supporting well-being in challenging times*, this Report shares how we have been able to help the greater community around us through our programs and services. We invite you to take a look and see how Covia has made a difference to so many through this difficult year.



## COVID-19 Update

February 26, 2021

This week, our nation remembered the over 500,000 people who have died from COVID-19 in the past year. Here at Covia during our semi-annual meetings, Ron Schaefer, our Chief Operating Officer, shared that seven of those deaths have been among our own residents. It may be a small number compared to half a million, but to the family and friends of those seven people, these deaths are significant, painful, and real. We invite you this weekend to take time to remember them, perhaps setting aside seven minutes of silence to commemorate those in our Covia community whom we have lost in the midst of this pandemic.

The Task Force reflected on the past year as we mark one year of meeting together and consider what the future holds. We shared some of our memories and how this work has had an impact on us in a new blog post here: <https://covia.org/blog/reflections-from-the-covid-19-task-force/>. All of us want to share that it is a privilege to support you.

In a pulse survey to our employees, we asked what measures our employees would suggest for increasing our preparedness or improving our COVID-19 response. We received many helpful recommendations, but overall we were encouraged to hear that our employees feel positive about our response. We want to make it clear that all the plans in the world mean nothing without the people who carry them out. Thank you to everyone, residents and employees, who have kept us safe and healthy through your actions.

One employee commented, “No bajar la guardia, porque el enemigo aún no ha sido vencido,” which (according to Google translate) means “Do not lower your guard, because the enemy has not yet been defeated.” Even as numbers go down and some counties begin to be in the Red tier, remember that this positive trend will only continue if we keep up our practices of staying home except for essential business, wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance between people when we are out, washing our hands, taking symptoms of COVID-19 seriously, and getting vaccinated when you can, if you haven’t already done so. Although we have come a long way, we still have some distance to go.

Next Friday, March 5, is Employee Appreciation Day. We hope you know that you are appreciated every day. This year, we encourage residents and managers to share a special message or act of kindness with all of our employees who have done and continue to do so much. Thank you, as always, for all you do.