

March 16, 2020: Since the first reports of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) came out in early January, The Baptist Home has been monitoring the situation. In early March, The Home issued its first response by recommending that all visitors and staff stay home if they were sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms. A temporary sick leave policy was put in place to allow staff more flexibility to miss work in order to seek treatment. Campus administrators attended webinars on COVID-19 to learn how to implement best practices and infection control procedures to prevent the spread of the virus. On Friday, March 13, The Baptist Home leadership team took additional steps to protect residents and staff. They met to discuss and to review the latest information made available by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on COVID-19 with the goal of developing a proactive strategy to further protect the residents and staff of The Baptist Home.

According to reports released by the CDC, studies have shown that COVID-19 is causing a higher mortality rate among the elderly population. Also, there is a risk that people who appear healthy may be capable of infecting others even though they are without symptoms, or asymptomatic. In light of this information, experts have recommended that we take immediate action to limit as much face-to-face contact with our residents as possible.

Consequently, due to the increasing concern over the transmission of COVID-19 and the increasing risk of exposure, we have implemented the following visitor restriction protocols to help ensure the safety of our residents and staff.

- As of Monday, March 16, we have “closed” all campuses to outside visitors. Only authorized personnel are being allowed access to resident areas. Resident family members will be granted restricted access IF they are coming to see a loved one with a critical illness or end-of-life issues. If one of these conditions applies, the family member will be asked to sign-in/out and be escorted by a nurse to and from the resident’s room.
- During this time, we are encouraging family members to use alternative methods of communicating with their loved ones, i.e. personal phone calls or virtual visits via Facetime, etc. We are committed to do all we can to help facilitate this process and coordinate virtual visits with family members as needed.
- Campus entrances are being limited. Vendors are being asked to sign-in and out at designated areas.
- Chapel services are being held for the benefit of our residents; however, residents are kept at least six feet apart as recommended by the CDC to prevent virus transmission. This sometimes requires that more than one chapel service be held in order to accommodate all residents.
- Independent living residents that come on campus for meals have a segregated eating area away from other residents.
- Resident meals are no longer being served buffet style until the restrictions are lifted.
- Staff are being screened before reporting to work for symptoms, i.e. fever, cough, etc.
- Staff who are diagnosed with the illness will not be allowed to return to work for 14 days.
- If a resident is exhibiting any symptoms or receives a positive diagnosis, they will be quarantined for 14 days.
- Church groups and outside organizations previously scheduled to come on campus for programs or activities are being cancelled or rescheduled for a future date.
- **We will reevaluate this protocol and visitor restrictions on May 1st.**

We understand that we cannot eliminate all risk; however, we believe that by taking these steps, we can greatly reduce the risk of potential infection. In addition to restricting visitor access, we are taking every precaution as recommended by the CDC.

Specific actions we are taking:

- 1) Our campus administrators have attended an in-service on best practices for preventing COVID-19 as presented by the Missouri Association of Nursing Home Administrators and have provided a follow-up in-service to share any new information with the staff.
- 2) We are following the recommendations provided by the CDC:
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.**
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Stay home when sick. *[Our staff have been instructed to follow our Temporary Sick Leave policy to protect our residents and other staff from the spread of communicable illnesses.]*
- 3) We have implemented a Temporary Sick Leave Policy and have advised staff to seek medical attention before reporting to work if they are experiencing any respiratory illness or flu-like symptoms.
- 4) Hand sanitizer stations have been set-up at all workstations and throughout public areas in each facility.
- 5) Staff are being extra diligent with good handwashing and infection control measures, i.e. cleaning hard surfaces, disinfecting, etc.
- 6) Housekeeping staff are monitoring soap and towel supplies more frequently and disinfecting resident rooms and community bathrooms daily.

We understand that this is a time of uncertainty, and we want to reassure our residents and their families that The Baptist Home is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all our residents and staff. The health and safety of our residents and staff is our top priority. We also want our residents, their families and our staff to know that we are praying daily for their health and safety. We greatly appreciate the prayers of Missouri Baptists for our residents and staff during this time. We believe that by combining best care practices while practicing faith over fear and prayer over panic, God will see us through this difficult time.

We will continue to monitor the situation for any further developments and will enact any further recommendations as directed by the CDC. If you have any questions or concerns, we encourage you to contact our Corporate office directly, (573) 546-2709 or email covid-19@thebaptisthome.org.

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