



March 15, 2021

To Our Residents, Family Members and Staff:

We currently have no positive tests of COVID-19 in the facility. No resident has tested positive or are suspected to have COVID-19.

The safety and wellbeing of our residents and staff is our top priority. We are doing what we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 within Stephenson Nursing Center/Walnut Acres, including staying in very close communication with local and state health officials to ensure we are taking all the appropriate steps under current circumstances.

We will be re-testing all staff and residents for COVID-19 and will continue to report the results when complete.

We are continuing with the recommendations from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19, such as:

- Enhanced infection control precautions
- Screening residents, staff, and essential visitors for expanded list of symptoms
- No visitors are allowed in the facility.
- All group activities are still cancelled
- Residents will continue to eat meals in their rooms, as determined appropriate
- Staff wear masks throughout the facility
- Continued assessments of resident's respiratory status and condition

As previously presented we want to make sure you continue check in to the [Walnut Acres Facebook Page](#) and [Walnut Acres website](#) for information on events and other updates.

We know you are concerned about your loved one, but it is crucial that we continue to restrict visitation to reduce the spread of this virus to others. We will contact you directly if your loved one is suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19.

We also understand that connecting with family members is incredibly important to our residents. Family members are encouraged to connect with their loved ones through video chat, calling, texting, or on social media. Please contact us at walnutacres@co.stephenson.il.us if you need assistance in scheduling these alternative communication methods or have other questions.

We are also available to conduct window visits Monday through Friday. Please contact us through the email above to set up a time.

We need your help in battling COVID-19. Please visit the CDC website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) to learn how you can help prevent the spread in our community, since continued spread in the larger community increases the chance the virus will work its way into our building.

This is a difficult time for everyone. We will continue to provide you with updates. Please know that we are adhering to guidelines from the local and state health departments, which continue to evolve as we learn more about this virus.

We are happy to announce that IDPH is in the process of issuing new guidelines for nursing home visits! We are very hopeful that the updated guidelines will help us create some beautiful memories, and reunions of loved ones very soon!



This has been a year full of sacrifices and compromises, and we are so grateful to be seeing some positive changes happening. As always, we will be ever diligent in our testing, screening, and handwashing procedures of both the staff and residents to ensure they are safe and healthy.

Please understand that our Infection Preventionist and staff are working rigorously to ensure that Walnut Acres will continue to be in line with all new guidelines. Walnut Acres will be unable to make any changes to our current visitation policy until Illinois Department of Health (IDPH), the regulatory agency from which we are governed, updates their regulations.

From a memo we received from IDPH Friday, " CMS has just issued new guidance for visitation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 PHE, including the impact of COVID-19 vaccination. IDPH is currently reviewing the guidance and will updating their guidance soon. Illinois providers must continue with IDPH guidance until further notice. "

As soon as Walnut Acres receives updated guidance from IDPH, we will notify our families with a letter, through Facebook and through our website. Historically during COVID, IDPH may take 2-3 weeks before they update their requirements based on new CMS recommendations.

We cannot wait to see your smiling eyes and warm hearts in person instead of through the window! Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!