



Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,

This newsletter is being sent to responsible parties listed as the primary contact for the residents of the Baldwin Care Center. Birch Haven Assisted Living is also sending this newsletter to responsible parties. The Apartment Manager distributes copies to the Birchwood Apartment tenants. Responsible parties can direct other family members to the Baldwin Care Center website at www.baldwincarecenter.com to read current and previous newsletters. If there is a topic you would like discussed in the newsletter, please contact me via email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.

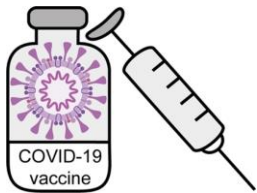
I am happy to be back after my recent surgery. I found that I did not recover as quickly as I would have liked to. The surgeon had indicated that I could go back to work in one to two weeks. I had the surgery on Tuesday, September 7th and returned to work on Wednesday, September 15th. I guess I am recovering in a timely fashion, it just doesn't seem that way. I know that patience is a virtue, but it is still difficult. It also seems that as we age, we may take a bit longer to heal. I appreciate the kind words from residents, staff and family members regarding my surgery and recovery.

COVID-19 Updates

This week I have to report that we did have some cases of COVID-19 on the campus. Baldwin Care Center had a part-time employee test positive on September 7th. This employee did not have direct contact with residents so we did not have to quarantine residents of the Baldwin Care Center or prohibit visits. An employee of the Birchwood Apartments tested positive on September 8th. This employee did have direct contact with tenants. Two tenants also tested positive for COVID-19 on September 11th and September 14th. One of the tenants was vaccinated and one was not. The Birchwood Apartments will be quarantined until September 21st. Staff and residents of both the Baldwin Care Center and Birchwood Apartments were all tested and all of the test results came back negative. I know that everyone grows tired of hearing about the importance of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. But I cannot stress enough how important this is, particularly in this setting. The statistics continue to indicate that if people have received the vaccine, the risk for death or hospitalization is dramatically decreased.




The COVID-19 positivity rate in St. Croix County continues to climb. It is currently at 9.8%. When the county positivity rate reaches 10%, the facility will be required to test all unvaccinated staff twice weekly. We have recently gone from only being required to test twice monthly to once per week and soon to be twice weekly. This increase is alarming. My fear is that we will be in a situation like we were previously. We continue to see the number of referrals from hospitals increase. Some hospital beds are being occupied by COVID patients and other patients that need to be discharged to another level of care outside the hospital. Many of the referrals we are receiving are for residents from another community. One of the Twin Cities hospitals that we receive many referrals from indicated that they were at 110% capacity. The frustration that hospitals are having is that skilled nursing facilities like us, are hesitant to take residents whose care we cannot manage. We evaluate each referral carefully, making certain we have an adequate number of staff to care for residents. As I have continued to indicate, staffing long term care facilities has become increasingly difficult.



All long-term care facilities are still awaiting the publication of the vaccine mandate for skilled nursing facility staff. CMS initially said the rule would come out in late September. Now that the decision has been made to expand the vaccine mandate to other CMS certified settings who receive Medicare and Medicaid funding, this will delay the release of the rule. We are now being told to expect the rule in October. At this time we do not know what the effective date of the rule will be. CMS has not provided details as to if there will be exemptions from this rule, such as medical exemptions or religious exemptions. There is no information available as to whether there will be a "test out" option in lieu of vaccination. We also do not know if visitors will be impacted by the vaccine mandate. Under current requirements and guidance, nursing homes are permitted to ask the vaccination status of social visitors such as family and friends but may not restrict visitation based on vaccination status. There continue to be more questions than answers. Providers are anxiously awaiting the publication of the final rule. Of course, we will keep you informed of any developments regarding this important issue.



Just a reminder about the campus wide car show. The car show will be held in the front parking lot of Birch Haven Assisted Living located at 640 Elm Street from 1:30-3:30 p.m. on Friday, September 24th. Staff, residents, tenants and family members are encouraged to bring their collectible cars that day. Please contact the Baldwin Care Center to let us know if you are bringing a vehicle that day. I plan on bringing "Millie the Mustang", my 2007 Ford Mustang convertible.

 The residents of the Baldwin Care Center were treated to Dilly bars on Friday, September 10th. The Dairy Queen also added some complimentary treats for the residents. Thank you so much!

*Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator*

Oktoberfest

