Due to presence of COVID in other long term care settings, Governor Walz has directed that all individuals who reside and work in nursing homes settings be offered testing for COVID-19.

The bulletin released by CMS states:

• CMS is committed to taking critical steps to ensure America’s healthcare facilities continue to respond effectively to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency (PHE).

• On August 25, 2020, CMS published an interim final rule with comment period (IFC). This rule establishes Long-Term Care (LTC) Facility Testing Requirements for Staff and Residents. Specifically, facilities are required to test residents and staff, including individuals providing services under arrangement and volunteers, for COVID-19 based on parameters set forth by the HHS Secretary. This memorandum provides guidance for facilities to meet the new requirements.

**On September 29, 2020, Good Shepherd will begin with offering the first round of routine testing which will be based on CMS’s Fillmore County positivity rate at the time of testing**. As of today’s date, our positivity rate is 3.2% placing us in the low rate meaning testing would occur once a month. According to the new LTC Facility Testing Requirements, facility must offer testing based on the following percentages:

* Low (<5%): Once a month
* Medium (5-10%): Once a week
* High (>10%) 2x per week

This testing is voluntary. All asymptomatic residents and staff will be given the option of testing when there are no confirmed cases in the facility.

In response to a confirmed positive resident or staff member case, Good Shepherd Lutheran Home will proceed with the following considerations:

* MDH recommends to repeat testing at least twice, 7 days and 14 days later, including only residents and staff who tested negative on the previous round.
* If day 7 and 14 testing rounds reveal no new positive tests, no additional rounds are needed at that time and the facility will resume routine testing based on Fillmore County Positivity rate. However, if new positive tests are returned on day 7 or 14 testing, Good Shepherd will continue to test negative residents and staff approximately every 7 days, until a minimum of two rounds return no new positive residents or staff.
* If a resident refuses to be tested they will be placed in quarantine throughout the testing process
* If a staff member refuses to be tested they will not be allowed to work.
* All outdoor and Essential Caregiver visits will be cancelled until a minimum of two rounds return no new positive residents or staff.

Please feel free to contact your loved ones’ Case Manager if you have specific questions or concerns regarding testing.

*Stay safe,*

*Good Shepherd Lutheran Services*