



COVID-19 Update March 15, 2020

As the past few days and weeks have unfolded, we realize that we are facing an unprecedented threat in our neighborhood, community, state, country and world with the COVID-19 virus. The health and safety of our residents and staff is our top priority – there is absolutely nothing more important than that.

Late Friday night, March 13, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new guidance with further restrictions for nursing homes. Additionally, today March 15, [Governor's Executive Order 2020-04](#) mandates all residences such as ours prohibit all visitors. We had already begun to put in place those same strong measures for our communities, in our health center as well as our independent living residences. We do not have a positive case of COVID-19, but we are taking proactive measures to reduce our risk.

This impacts our residents and resident families in a variety of ways, most significantly that we *will no longer allow external visitors to campus*, effective immediately. We are closing the dining rooms and we will be preparing meals for residents to pick up, we will be eliminating all group activities, and we will be increasing the cleaning of all common areas.

We are taking precautions with employees, and will be actively screening them (taking temperatures, and we are asking each employee questions directly related to their current health status, possible exposure to COVID-19, as well as any recent travel) before they can enter the building. Those staff who can work from home will be asked to do so. We are prepared to redeploy certain staff members as necessary, or utilize staff from The RiverWoods Group, our parent company.

One of the benefits of being a family of communities is that we have the resources of The RiverWoods Group, and each other (RiverWoods Exeter, Birch Hill and RiverWoods Durham) to collaborate, share best practices and assist where needed.

What can you do? Understand, if you are family, that we are doing this for your loved ones. Get ready to Skype, Zoom, FaceTime or just call them. Please help support our efforts to keep our residents safe. [Click here](#) to find a memo to residents from our CEO, and [a great article on "social distancing"](#) that you might find interesting.

If you have questions, please send them to us at CovidQuestion@BirchHillRC.org and we will respond. Thank you for understanding and joining in this fight together with us. The fight is to keep everyone safe. Working together – six feet apart – is the best way to stop the spread of this virus.