



April 6, 2021

Dear FutureCare Residents and Families,

This past week, even as Maryland set a record for new vaccinations, the state's COVID-19 cases and positivity rates continued to rise. We want to take this opportunity to reiterate a few key messages:

### **Stay Vigilant**

Health experts believe there are two reasons for the spike in cases: the prevalence of virus variants and the loosening of restrictions. In Maryland, six COVID-19 variants have been detected. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, variants such as the U.K. strain are **highly contagious**. At a recent press conference, Governor Hogan said 86 percent of COVID variants in Maryland are the highly contagious U.K. variant.

It's been a long year and we may have precaution-fatigue, but in order to safely get through these last days of the pandemic we need everyone to continue to strictly abide by the CDC guidelines and adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, including physical distancing, wearing a mask, and practicing proper hand-washing hygiene.

The CDC states that, if you are fully vaccinated, you should only gather indoors without wearing a mask if everyone in the room is fully vaccinated. The CDC defines "fully vaccinated" as two weeks after a person has received their final dose of the vaccine.

### **Stay Informed of Outbreaks Before Visiting**

The CDC guidance now allows for indoor visits regardless of vaccination status unless the resident has been infected, is in quarantine, or the facility is in outbreak status. The guidelines stress that outdoor visitation remains preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated.

As a facility's outbreak status can change quickly, it's a good idea to call ahead before planning your visit.

### **Get Vaccinated**

The state's vaccination schedule continues to move ahead. Governor Hogan announced last week that pre-registration is now open for all Marylanders age 16 and older. Starting April 6, all Marylanders 16 and older will be eligible for the vaccine at mass vaccination sites and by April 12 all Marylanders 16 and older will be eligible for

the vaccine through all providers. For more information on Maryland's COVID-19 vaccination plan and vaccination clinic locations, visit: [www.COVIDvax.maryland.gov](http://www.COVIDvax.maryland.gov).

**FutureCare is also pleased to announce that we will soon be scheduling additional vaccine clinics for FutureCare staff and residents in conjunction with our long-term care pharmacy, Remedi Senior Care. We will be able to offer the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at clinics that will be scheduled monthly.** Families must provide consent for residents to receive the vaccine. We strongly encourage everyone to get the vaccine. More information will be forthcoming once we are able to coordinate dates with our pharmacy. Vaccination is essential to safeguarding the health of you and your loved ones.

### **Stay Connected**

With everyone's cooperation and by supporting one another, we can reduce our loved ones' risks and get through the pandemic sooner. Each one of us plays a critical role in ending the pandemic. We know increased vigilance can be tiresome and can add hurdles to our busy days, but we urge you to please keep the COVID-19 'end zone' goals firmly in mind. Only together can we reach these goals: a safe reunion with our loved ones, a safe workplace and home for our FutureCare staff and residents, and a future where COVID-19 is behind us.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have.

Thank you, and best wishes for a safe and healthy spring,

Executive Director