



March 1, 2021

Dear Family Member,

I wanted to take a few minutes and follow-up to last week's communication as several family members have had questions regarding the new visitor guidance. As I stated in my February 24th update, we are currently scheduling in-person visits to begin on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. This is conditional on whether or not we continue to have no new positive COVID cases. I'd like to remind you that our facility Visitor Response Plan can be referenced on our facility website at www.oneidahealth.org.

One question asked is whether or not visitors need to be tested because that is not required. I want to clarify that the NY State Department of Health may not require COVID testing of visitors when infection rates are below 5%, but they are recommending testing. As an organization, we have decided to follow the recommendations at this time and require visitors to have a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the visit.

We currently offer rapid testing at our Oneida Health COVID-19 Testing Center. Appointments require a physician order which can be faxed to 315-361-2912 prior to receiving an appointment. To allow adequate time to receive your result, we recommend getting tested 48 hours prior to your visit. Visitors can also be tested at any of the community based testing sites throughout the State. You will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test prior to your visit.

Another question asked is whether or not testing would be required for individuals who have received the COVID vaccine. There have been no exceptions made for those who have been vaccinated. Testing requirements and infection control protocols such as social distancing and mask wearing still apply to everyone.

As the vaccine is made available to more of the population, I am hopeful that the guidelines will change and not be so restrictive. Our intention is not to make it difficult for visitors, but need to follow the guidance set forth by the Governor, the Health Department and the CDC. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Sincerely,

Fortunato Scerbo III

Administrator

