

## **Buckner Retirement Services Weekly Update August 11, 2020**

Dear Buckner Residents and Families,

As you read in our memo last Friday, Texas Health & Human Services (HHSC) announced new limited visitor rules for nursing and long-term care communities. This week, I want to walk you through some of the obstacles and the solutions our team is working on to reunite residents in Nursing and Assisted Living with their loved ones as soon as possible.

As expected, some residents and family members have expressed concern about allowing visits, while others are anxious to see their loved ones. We are listening to all of your concerns and are committed to combatting the loneliness and isolation brought on by the pandemic in a manner that draws upon our growing knowledge of this virus and that properly mitigates risks.

First, it's important to note that while the State of Texas is pushing forward to allow visitors, **our communities are legally required to follow the strictest regulations in place, whether it is from the state, county or city.** For instance, Dallas County still has orders against visitors, so Ventana's healthcare levels are required to remain closed to visitors.

**Our communities can only begin allowing visitors to Nursing and Assisted Living after each care level records zero positive cases for 14 consecutive days and has no active positive cases.** In the event a positive case occurs, we will be required to temporarily close the care level to visitors and wait for another 14 consecutive days with no new positive cases and no active cases.

Per the orders from HHSC, **all visits with residents in Nursing are required to be outside.** Given the delicate condition of many of our Nursing residents and the extreme weather conditions of Texas in the summertime, our teams are exploring the viability of outdoor spaces that will provide protection against the weather while also adhering to proper social distancing guidelines.

HHSC will allow indoor and outdoor visits to take place for residents of Assisted Living and Memory Care, **as long as plexiglass barriers are used inside.** Our teams are constructing contact-free areas with the barriers where these visits may take place.

Buckner liaisons for HHSC are working quickly to interpret HHSC's orders and how to implement them. We are at the mercy of each community's local authorities, as **we must receive their written approval before visits will be allowed.**

**All visits are required to be by appointment only,** so we are developing an online guest reservation system to allow family members and friends to easily book times.

Each of our communities' executive directors will be in touch when reservations are open pending approval from HHSC.

There is one final obstacle I want to mention: Per HHSC requirements, **our Nursing areas must implement weekly testing of associates to permit visitors**. Not only is this an extravagant cost that Buckner will have to find a way to absorb, but we believe this will put a huge strain on our state's testing capabilities and cause long delays in results and an all-around shortage in tests. We do not yet have a solution for this, but we are communicating daily with the state to find one.

I share all this information with you because I want you to know it's not as simple as opening our communities right away. We want to welcome guests, but right now our hands are tied by rules and regulations that require strategic planning to implement in a manner that truly mitigates risk for residents and associates.

As we work through the process of adhering to the HHSC order from last week, we are also pursuing a more reasonable approach for family visits that we believe is just as safe, but less burdensome on all parties. In the coming days, you will hear more about ways you can be involved in helping us allow visits for residents, who desperately want to see their loved ones.

While I encourage you to click [here](#) to access a detailed timeline of cases specific to each community, the following is a summary I'll include each week for each access:

#### Community COVID-19 Active Case Summary

	Active PUIs	Active Positive Cases
Baptist Retirement Community	0	1
Buckner Villas	0	0
Calder Woods	0	0
Parkway Place	0	4
Ventana	0	0
Westminster Place	1	1

Please continue to visit the BRS website ([www.BucknerRetirement.org](http://www.BucknerRetirement.org)) for our community case tracker and timelines, as well as our lists of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) –you may also call 855-754-3338 with questions at any time.

Throughout all this, we remain committed to *Inspiring Happiness*. This week's comfort food cooking demonstration from Chef Stephan Pyles shows you how to make his delicious sweet potato pound cake: <https://youtu.be/3tidWyGiNWI>.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to care for the physical, mental and spiritual needs of Buckner residents.

Sincerely,  
Charlie Wilson