DATE: April 6, 2020

TO: GHA Staff

FROM: Barbara D’Agostino, GHA Executive Director

SUBJ: New Protocol: Staff Use of Masks

None of us has been untouched by COVID-19. It has changed our schedules and required us to change the way we operate on a daily basis. It has forced us to physically distance ourselves from each other. Most challenging in this profession, it has forced us to physically distance ourselves from the seniors we serve unless we are providing essential services.

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and because our goal is to keep all residents and staff healthy and infection-free, **we are requiring all staff to wear masks while at work.** Effective today, April 6, here is the protocol and requirement for staff and mask usage:

* **Health care workers:** surgical masks, as it is not possible for them to do their jobs at a six-foot distance. Health care department leaders distribute these masks to their teams.
* **All other staff:** cloth masks, which are appropriate when we are able to maintain social distancing. All staff should have been provided a cloth mask as of today. If you did not receive a mask, please see your Department Director immediately.

**If you are assigned a cloth mask,** please follow this guidance for usage and cleaning:

* **Usage:** If your mask has ties, secure the bottom ties first with a bow around the nape of your neck. Then pull the mask by the upper ties over your mouth and chin and secure around your head.
  + Wash your hands with soap and water before you put on the mask.
  + Wash your hands every time you touch your mask during the day! (Yes, every time.)
  + We are encouraging you to take your mask home so that you may utilize the mask for protective purposes when you are out of your home, such as grocery shopping.
* **Cleaning:** We ask that you launder your mask in a washing machine or by hand with hot soapy water **after every time you have worn it**.
* Put the mask somewhere isolated until it can be washed.
* Line the interior of your mask with a tissue.

Recently, residents from GHA joined in sewing masks for you. What a tremendous show of support for staff that our residents are making cloth masks for you!

I have never been prouder to be part this team and am honored to work with you!