

Another Investment in Our Safety: Solaris UV Machine Q&A

With Theresa Thomas, Director of Environmental Services

With a team of more than 75 staff serving GHA and GHBC, our Environmental Services (ES) Department serves a vital function in our infection precaution and planning efforts. We asked our Director of ES Theresa Thomas to tell us about the new Solaris UV Machine that Goodwin House is using to boost our sanitization procedures at GHA and GHBC.



Q. What is the Solaris UV Machine?

A. The Solaris is a portable machine that uses UV light to disinfect surfaces. This state-of-the-art technology was first introduced in hospitals as a cleaning device used in operating rooms to control the spread of infections. Thanks to its ability to destroy pathogens after regular cleaning, it provides assurance that the next patient enters a clean surgical area. As the technology improved and moved away from mercury bulbs to xenon bulbs, its capacity for use in other healthcare environments was noted, and it was soon introduced into Long-Term Care and Assisted Living settings. Its primary use has always been to address high-touch patient surfaces. With the spread of COVID-19, its use has increased throughout all healthcare areas.

Q. How did we learn about the Solaris and what was involved in making this investment in new infection precaution technology?

A. Our CEO Rob Liebreich introduced the Solaris system to the Infection Precaution & Planning (IPP) Team back in April. Rob had seen the effectiveness of Solaris at his former community (Asbury Methodist Village) and initiated a conversation with a local vendor on behalf of Goodwin House. This was a large investment from Goodwin House, and with the assistance of our Senior Leadership, Executive Directors and Supply Chain Department, we were able to negotiate pricing and maintenance services for two units. I was also able to gain useful information from Harold Jones, who is in charge of Environmental Services at Asbury Methodist Village, where the Solaris system is already a part of their cleaning process.

*We are committed to keeping you, residents and staff healthy.
Please join us in our efforts to keep our community infection-free.*



Q. Where on campus is the Solaris being used? How often are you using it?

A. We have one Solaris UV Machine at each community. We will use the Solaris throughout all community spaces. It will provide the final step of cleaning on all high-touch areas in Health Care resident rooms and restrooms. Our first priority is cleaning any COVID-19 rooms, and we will also use the Solaris for discharge and isolation room cleaning. Public restrooms and other large meeting areas that remain points of high-touch throughout our campuses will also benefit from the Solaris system.

Q. How does it work?

A. The Solaris is used after our normal cleaning procedures to destroy any remaining pathogens. Unlike chemical approaches, UV light provides rapid, effective inactivation of microorganisms through a physical process. When bacteria, viruses and protozoa are exposed to the germicidal wavelengths of UV light, they are rendered incapable of reproducing and infecting. Because it is not a chemical, it does not leave any residue. The head of the machine rotates and applies the UV light to disinfect within your desired radius. We position the machine in the room to allow maximum coverage of about 10 feet. We can program it based on time cycles of three, five and 10 minutes. Cycles are typically three minutes in a restroom and two to five minutes in bedrooms.

Q. What are the benefits of using the Solaris?

A. The benefit of the Solaris system is the added assurance it provides. I believe our Environmental Services teams have been tremendous in their infection precautions, but given the rise of COVID-19 and other pathogens, it is comforting to know we have another resource to implement in the fight to keep our communities clean and sanitized. We're grateful that Goodwin House has the financial resources to make this investment in everyone's safety!

Q. When did Goodwin House start using the Solaris machine on our campuses?

A. On June 9th, the Environmental Services teams at both communities completed a three-day, one-on-one training that included best practices for operating the Solaris in Healthcare and Residential Living spaces. Since training, it has been used at both communities in our COVID testing areas, offices and in healthcare rooms.

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