

THE MATHER UPDATE

IMPORTANT FAQs

Please direct questions to:

bewell@thematherevanston.com or call (847) 492.4651.

April 24, 2020

Dear Residents,

In follow-up to our communication on April 23, 2020, we wanted to provide an update. We understand there are many questions about what we are doing to protect residents and employees. Please be assured we are working diligently to minimize further exposure of this virus and are following guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Our top priority, focus, and attention are on the people who live and work at our community.

Please see the below Important FAQs that we have compiled.

Q: Will testing be conducted for the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

A: We're sure that many of you are reading about increased availability of testing and are wondering if testing would be beneficial to implement at The Mather. As a licensed continuing care retirement community, The Mather must comply with federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines.

From a federal perspective, The Mather follows the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which currently recommends testing people who exhibit symptoms. Locally, we have coordinated with the Evanston Health and Human Services (HHS) Department, which directed us to CDC guidance. Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) shared that IDPH's strategy for testing in long-term care settings is to increase testing as supplies become available. IDPH does not want facilities to conduct testing unless notified by the State. If the State identifies a long-term care setting as a priority for testing, they will notify the community and provide the tests.

This continues to be an evolving situation and we are closely monitoring guidance from the regulatory bodies that oversee The Mather. Should such guidance change, The Mather will respond. We have been reviewing sources of testing and will be reaching out to these sources to learn more.

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Q: If IDPH cannot supply testing, can The Mather contract with a private lab to conduct testing?

A: As noted above, The Mather needs to comply with the regulatory bodies that oversee The Mather.

Q: Since there is a positive case in the Life Centre, will you test the residents in the Life Centre?

A: Evanston HHS conducts trace testing of confirmed cases and will notify The Mather if the Department believes specific residents in the Life Centre should be tested.

It is important to note: The Mather has been operating under the assumption that COVID-19 exists in the community. As such, current protocols and practices regarding infection prevention, including: health screening of staff and residents for symptoms; enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection; use of personal protective equipment during resident care; and restriction of visitors, would not change if testing occurred.

Q: I have heard that another community may be testing.

A: IDPH has noted that testing strategies are determined based on available epidemiological and situational data. Each community is different, and testing is based on its unique circumstance.

Q: Can you tell us where the resident resides who has a confirmed case?

A: The resident resides in an isolation area in skilled nursing. The Mather took proactive and unprecedented steps to develop a “negative air pressure” isolation wing to separate residents who are symptomatic. This area contains 5 suites. Should additional isolation suites be needed, The Mather will expand this area.

Q: How will I know if I have been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case?

A: The Evanston Health and Human Services Department will conduct trace mapping and will contact people who are identified as having had close contact with this person.

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Q: Will employees be tested?

A: As noted above, based on guidance from IDPH, we do not plan on testing employees. We are committed to our infection control protocols and measures to help keep employees and residents healthy and well. Some of these measures include:

- Health screenings and temperature checks for all employees
- Self-monitoring of symptoms by employees when offsite
- Employees being designated to work in one area of the community, i.e., independent living or the Life Centre
- Physical distancing from others (no closer than 6 feet away for no more than 10 minutes)
- Frequent hand washing for more than 20 seconds
- Wearing masks and other personal protective equipment, as needed

Q: Does The Mather have sufficient PPE?

A: At this time, we do. We have a team member who is dedicated to sourcing, procuring, and monitoring usage of PPE daily. Hospitals and first responders have typically been first to receive PPE, so senior living communities have had to work extra hard to source and secure supplies. We are also working with Evanston HHS to assist in providing supplies, as needed.

Q: Do employees know the sequence for putting on and removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

A: Yes. We are following CDC sequence guidelines for putting on and removing PPE. We are also conducting ongoing training and education for staff who wear PPE.

Q: Are there staff who cross over between independent living and the Life Centre?

A: The Life Centre has designated staff, with the exception of building services staff who may need to respond to emergency work orders in the Life Centre. If this occurs, building services staff will wear PPE while in the Life Centre.

Q: How can I help prevent COVID-19?

A: The most helpful thing you can do is to remain in your apartment home. We encourage you to continue to protect yourself and others by practicing “physical distancing” (no closer than 6 feet away for no more than 10 minutes); good hand hygiene by washing your hands frequently for 20 or more seconds; and wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose when you are out in public for essential

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medical appointments, in common areas such as elevators and corridors, or in our private garden areas.

Q: What is your process for keeping us informed?

A: We understand and appreciate your desire for information. We will continue to keep you informed regularly through email (which is also published at www.thematherevanston.com/alerts). If you would like to be added to the email communication list or have urgent questions, please direct them to: bewell@thematherevanston.com. We appreciate your patience and will respond as quickly as we can.

Our main focus is on the priority and safety of those living and working at The Mather. This is a stressful time for all – residents, staff, and family members. Please remember that team members working in the Life Centre, do so out of passion and concern for residents. These employees know that they could potentially be risking their health in terms of potential exposure to the virus and have a choice of where they work. They are working extremely hard and are the heroes in all of this. They are grateful for your respect, patience, and support during this difficult time.

Q: Is there anything family members can do to help?

A: In the event you have access to new thermal (no-touch) thermometers, please drop them off at The Mather's Concierge, 425 Davis Street, Evanston, IL. And, as noted above, being respectful, patient, and supportive of Life Centre staff will help make a stressful job a little easier.

Q: What does deep cleaning of the community entail?

A: We have contracted with a national company to sanitize and complete a deep clean of high touch areas in The Mather when necessary, and as needed. This in-depth process provided by outside professionals helps us focus on our ongoing operations and cleaning of resident suites. Additionally, on a daily basis, The Mather frequently sanitizes high touch areas throughout the community.

Q: How are you monitoring symptoms?

A: Residents in the Life Centre are being monitored for vital signs, breathing status, and oxygen levels. If there is a change in symptoms, we will promptly notify the resident's physician and family member and follow the physician's guidance for testing.

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Q: There continues to be new information about COVID-19, including potential symptoms. What symptoms should I be self-monitoring?

A: Symptoms may include: a loss of taste or smell, cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, and gastrointestinal issues such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting. **Please note that pink eye, eye pain, or vertigo, as well as discoloration of the toes** may also be COVID-19 symptoms. If you experience any of these symptoms, please immediately reach out to your physician regarding your condition.

Q: What is your housekeeping process?

A: Limited housekeeping services will begin in independent living apartment homes on Monday, April 27. Residents will have the option to opt out, if desired, by contacting the Housekeeping team at (847) 492.4638. The Housekeeping team member will wear PPE including a mask, gloves, goggles or a face shield, and a gown. We request residents wear a mask during the cleaning visit and be in a different room to provide physical distancing.

Take care and stay well.

Sincerely,

Deann Daniel,
Executive Director

PS: Please note that this letter is being shared with all resident's current emergency contacts.



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425 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201

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