



**To: The Timbercrest Community**

**From:** Sabine Thomas, HFA Director of Resident Care

**Date:** September 2, 2020

**RE: New Testing Requirements for Staff and Residents published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS)**

As of September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Timbercrest along with all other nursing home facilities in the country are required to test all staff and residents for COVID-19 when certain situations arise. These situations are:

1. Testing a resident or staff member when they showing signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
2. When an outbreak of Covid-19 is declared. This will result in testing ALL staff and ALL residents. CMS defines an “outbreak” as one new case among nursing home staff or one new nursing home-onset case among residents. Because there is no absolute separation between Residential and Health Care/Crestwood all residents in the Manor will be subject to these testing requirements.
3. Mandatory staff testing based on the prevalence of the virus in our region at least monthly and as frequently as twice per week.

The test used is a viral test. This test checks to see if you are infected with the coronavirus. The test looks for proteins (antigens) in a sample taken from the nose or throat. A plan of action for staff and residents testing positive for COVID-19 is in place. In case of a declared “outbreak” continuous testing is required of those who initially tested negative until the outbreak has ended.

Besides doing all we can to prevent infections in our community, Timbercrest has invested in a diagnostic device which will allow for testing in house. Delivery of this device, as well as the one CMS is providing to nursing homes, is anticipated several weeks from now. Should it become necessary to test all staff and residents before we have our testing devices, we would reach out to the Indiana State Department of Health and the Wabash County Health Department for assistance.

In the meantime, the entire Timbercrest staff is scheduled for another Indiana State Department of Health mandated round of testing. This will be on September 8 and 9.

Don't hesitate to reach out to Dr. Pamela Higgins, Medical Director; Melissa Miller, RN Director of Nursing; Brent Swan, LPN Infection Preventionist; or myself if you have questions or concerns regarding these new guidelines.

**Thank you for your support as we are “making good things happen ... together!”**