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**SAGEPOINT SENIOR LIVING SERVICES RESPONDS TO COVID-19 DATA,
CALLS FOR UNIVERSAL TESTING AT ALL LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**

“These are not statistics on a page. Our residents become our family members from the moment they arrive here. When we lose them...it is devastating to us”

LAPLATA, MD (Wednesday, April 29, 2020) – Throughout most of March, aggressive measures put in place by the leadership team at Sagepoint Senior Living Services had kept coronavirus safely outside its doors. Visitors were prohibited from entering the facility, virtual visits were provided via i-Pads along with daily wellness check calls from nursing staff to all residents’ family representatives, and the leadership obtained enough kits to test all residents and staff, a practice commonly known as universal testing.

On March 30, a Sagepoint resident who at the time was being treated at a hospital, was diagnosed with COVID-19. Sagepoint President and CEO Andrea Dwyer immediately notified families and staff in a message posted on the facility’s public website.

“We have been informed today that a resident who was originally transferred to the hospital for non-COVID related symptoms has now tested positive for COVID-19,” Dwyer wrote in the March 30 message. “The resident is currently at the hospital. At this point, it is unclear where the virus was contracted.”

Despite their early and best efforts, over the past three weeks the fast-moving COVID-19 predatory virus attacked Sagepoint. As of today, 96 of 146 residents in the skilled nursing tested positive. Of the 96 residents who have tested positive, 33 have died. The first resident death was recorded on April 12. One staff member has also succumbed to the virus.

“Let me tell you what the most important number is to us at Sagepoint: one,” Dwyer said. “We care about every single resident we lose to this horrible pandemic. These are not statistics on a page. Our residents become our family members from the moment they arrive here. When we lose them, we cry and grieve just like their family members at home. It is devastating to us.”

Dwyer said Sagepoint instituted aggressive measures to contain the virus before and after the March 30 diagnosis at the hospital.

“We instituted CDC recommendations for PPE use when caring for a COVID positive patient, including full PPE masks, gowns, gloves, and shields,” Dwyer said. “We reduced unnecessary traffic on units by non-essential staff. We had previously instituted a ‘no medically unnecessary’ visitors policy, screening of each staff member’s temperature twice per shift, and respiratory and temperature checks on residents on each shift.

“We have followed CDC guidelines every step of the way,” she continued. “We tested early and we tested everyone, regardless of whether they had symptoms or not. There is a very small percentage of nursing home facilities that we know, less than one percent, that have done that in Maryland. We went out and obtained enough test kits early to be able to do that.

“We are calling on the state health department to mandate universal testing for all long-term care facilities such as ours,” Dwyer added. “It’s the right thing to do.”

Dwyer said nursing home and assisted living facilities are especially vulnerable to infectious diseases such as COVID-19 because of the at-risk populations they serve and the close proximity required to deliver care.

“All of our residents have underlying health conditions when they arrive here,” Dwyer pointed out. “Our average age is 89 years old, and 84 percent of our residents would qualify for end-of-life palliative care. The oldest and most vulnerable residents in our communities live in facilities just like ours. Sadly, nursing homes are ‘ground zero’ for COVID-19.

“It’s important to remember that this happened **to** our facility,” she added. “It is not something we caused. It’s something that happened to us. And we have done our very best to manage in this devastating pandemic.”

Dwyer said Sagepoint will continue to follow CDC guidelines, and work closely with the local and state health departments.

“We are going to press on and provide the same outstanding, five star level of care for our residents that we have for nearly half a century,” Dwyer said.

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