

Southern Ocean Center (“Facility”)

Outbreak Response Plan

Southern Ocean Center (the “**Facility**”) has developed and implemented an outbreak response plan in compliance with the guidelines issued by Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service (CDS), New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Facility’s Local Department of Health (the “**Outbreak Plan**”). The Outbreak Plan targets, among other things, infection control, infection prevention, reporting and, transparency through communication with our residents/patients and their representative(s), if any, as well as their family and loved ones. Our goal, as always, is to provide for the safety and wellbeing of our residents and patients. The Outbreak Plan includes, but is not limited to: (1) evidence-based outbreak response measures, (2) screening of all visitors, employees, vendors, and others that seek to enter the Facility, (3) testing of residents/patients, employees and other staff, (4) emergency staffing preparedness, (5) ongoing status communications and updates to residents/patients and their representatives, family and/or loved ones, and (6) visitation rules to protect the health and safety of our residents/patients and their visitors, while ensuring the least restrictive environment to enhance quality of life.

Many of our residents and team members were infected with the Covid-19 virus. Many have recovered, unfortunately, some have not. They were mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, spouses and friends. We send our deepest condolences and wish comfort to those that lost a loved one. Each one was unique and special, talented and gifted in their own special way and they will remain a part of the hearts and minds of the [Insert Facility Name] family forever. While we cannot guarantee that some of our residents/patients will not become infected with Covid-19 or another future pandemic, our Outbreak Plan was developed with the understanding that preparedness is the best defense to ensure that we have all the necessary tools in place to maintain the safest environment possible.

The Facility’s Outbreak Plan is as follows:

1. Evidence-Based Outbreak Response Measures

a. Guideline Monitoring & Compliance. The Facility closely monitors all Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”), New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service (“CDS”), New Jersey Department of Health (“NJDOH”), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (“CMS”) and Local Board of Health (“LHD”) guidelines and directives (collectively, the “**Governmental Guidelines & Directives**”) for information regarding any outbreak of new or reemerging infectious disease detected in the geographic region of the facility. If a new/reemergence of an infectious disease is detected, the Facility will follow its Infection Control policies and the measures and procedures set forth therein.

b. Control Measures. The Facility will institute control measures, mitigate infection control concerns with minimal disruption of residents’ quality of life routines. These measures may include, but are not limited to, universal masking, isolating ill residents, cohorting residents, contact/droplet precautions, social distancing, frequent Covid-19 in-services and handwashing as well as PPE education and competencies. Environmental Measures will also be taken including, but not limited to, more frequent cleaning of high touch areas and the evaluation and the proper usage of cleaning and disinfectant agents.

2. Screening & Protective Measures.

a. Screening. Screening is an essential defense to the introduction of Covid-19 into the Facility by employees, essential workers, healthcare personnel and all other permitted visitors. All employees, essential workers, healthcare personnel and all other permitted visitors entering the Facility will be screened. Any employees, essential workers, healthcare personnel and other permitted visitors shall be denied entrance into the Facility if the individual: **(a)** exhibits signs or symptoms of a respiratory or infection as delineated by all applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives; **or** **(b)** has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet met criteria for the discontinuation of isolation in accordance with current Governmental Guidelines & Directives;

Southern Ocean Center (“Facility”)

b. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE is also an essential element to prevent the spread of an infectious disease (including Covid-19) to our residents/patients and to employees, essential workers, healthcare personnel and all other permitted visitors. If after screening, the employee, essential worker, healthcare personnel and or other permitted visitor is permitted to enter facility, the facility shall: (1) Require the individual to wear a facemask in the facility and additional protective equipment (PPE) as required by applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives and such additional PPE as may be determined by the facility; (2) provide instruction to visitors, before the visitors enters the Facility, on hand hygiene, the location of handwashing stations, limiting the number of surfaces touched and the use of PPE; and (3) limit the individual’s movement within the Facility to those areas necessary to complete tasks or visitation. . The Facility trains all employees on proper use of PPE on an ongoing basis in accordance with applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives.

3. Testing, Refusal of Testing & Cohorting.

a. Testing. The early detection of infections with COVID-19 amongst the Facility staff and resident/patient(s) is also essential to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The Facility utilizes only those testing methodologies that are approved by all applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives. The Facility has tested, and will continue to test, the Facility’s staff and residents for Covid-19 in accordance with all Governmental Guidelines & Directives and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA); (2) authorized by the FDA through an Emergency Use Authorization; and/or (3) approved by the New Jersey Clinical Laboratory Improvement Service as permitted by the FDA. All newly admitted or readmitted patients/residents are tested in accordance with applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives. The Facility closely monitors Governmental Guidelines & Directives and works closely with its local Health Department with respect to the frequency of testing and retesting which is updated in accordance with all applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives as new guidance is issued based on epidemiology and data about the circulation of virus in the community and the Facility, if any.

b. Refusal of Testing. The Facility will preclude any Facility staff member from entry into the Facility if that staff member (i) refuses to participate in COVID-19 testing; and/or (ii) refuses to authorize release of their testing results to the Facility until return to work criteria are met, or all outbreak testing procedures have been completed. Residents who refuse testing will be educated, using a person-centered approach, on the importance of testing. If the resident continues to refuse, he/she will be managed in accordance with the [CDC guidance](#) for use of TBP.

c. Cohorting. Cohorting is another important mechanism to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the Facility. Cohorting is the grouping and care of individuals in the same room/area according to clinically based criteria (e.g., the grouping and segregating of Covid-19 positive/residents/patients and patients/residents exhibiting symptoms of a respiratory infection from all other residents/patients. The Facility will cohort residents, patients, equipment and staff, to the extent possible, according to most current applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives.

4. Emergency Staffing. The infection of Facility Staff by Covid-19 or any other pandemic infectious disease may cause a sudden staffing shortage for which the Facility has developed its “**Emergency Staffing Strategies for COVID-19**” policy and procedures. This policy and procedures which were reviewed and approved by the NJDOH will be followed to address any staffing shortages related to Covid-19 and any other infectious pandemic disease outbreak. The facility will utilize a myriad of temporary staffing options, including using CDC guidelines Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages, a pool of temporary employees, using temporary staffing services, or deploying consultants or contract workers, depending on the numbers, skill sets, and credentials needed to ensure that the Facility is always appropriately staffed in the midst of a staffing shortage caused by a pandemic.

5. Reporting Requirements. The filing of reports is an important means to provide those charged with oversight and regulation of healthcare, namely our federal and state governmental agencies, with timely and accurate information needed to make prompt and necessary decisions. The Facility shall comply with all reporting requirements of all applicable Governmental Guidelines & Directives including, but not limited to, reporting to the NHSN through the SAMS portal (overseen by the CDC) as required by NJDOH Executive Directive No. 20-026.

6. Communication Plan. The Facility believes that full transparency and prompt communication with residents and

Southern Ocean Center (“Facility”)

their families regarding the status of Covid-19 at the Facility significantly contributes to the emotional well-being of our resident/patients and their families and loved ones. When the Covid-19 pandemic first struck, the Facility immediately implemented daily ZOOM calls with all family members. The Facility will continue to maintain an open line of communication with residents’/patients’ representatives, if applicable, and their families including, but not limited to, actions taken by the Facility to prevent exposure to, and mitigate the risk of, COVID-19 spread. These updates will also include any new or suspected cases COVID-19 in the facility. All communication will be sent out in compliance with the frequency and content as required by all applicable and current Governmental Guidelines & Directives. The Facility also provides its residents and staff with continuous updates of the status of Covid-19 at the Facility via email daily.

7. Visitation. Visits of family members and loved ones are very much encouraged and are an essential component to our residents’/patients’ emotional and physical wellbeing. All family visitations are conducted in accordance with the CDC’s, CMS and NJDOH’s health and safety precautions guidelines for indoor and outdoor visitations. Facilities must allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents as permitted under these regulations. Facility provide guidelines for Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention. Core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for nursing homes, and should be adhered to at all times.

8. Lessons Learned from Experience with the COVID-19 Outbreak. The last few years have truly been a challenge for healthcare providers and for our governmental agencies providing guidance and directives to fight an unknown and novel illness that unexpectedly infected our country and its communities. We have learned that open and expedient communication with residents and family made a distinct difference to their overall welfare. Communication was the key to alleviate some of the anxiety and fear the pandemic has caused. Another lesson learned was the role of testing during the height of the pandemic. Testing is an essential tool to fight the spread of Covid-19 as it enabled informed decisions to keep all safe.

We value a close working relationship with residents, family members and loved ones. We encourage you to continue to reach out to our staff for assistance for information about your loved one or with any concerns you may have.

Facility Phone Number: 609.978.0600

Nursing Home Administrator: John Myers, 609.978.0600, Extension 112

Director of Nursing: Yvonne London, 609.978.0600, Extension 111

Director of Social Services: Christine D’zio, 609.978.0600 Extension 136

Infection Preventionist: Beverly Garner RN, IP Extension 148

Phone number for urgent calls or complaints. 609.978.0600 / Manager on duty or Supervisor