

WHA RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

URGENT UPDATE – DECEMBER 7, 2020

The Thanksgiving holiday has passed and the country is already experiencing a surge surpassing what we witnessed in the spring. Hospitals and healthcare providers are quickly becoming overwhelmed. Cases caused by Thanksgiving gatherings have not even been fully accounted for yet. According to Dr. Fauci and the CDC, in the upcoming weeks, it **will** get worse.

Below is a small part of the obituary of Dr. Marvin Farr, who died on December 1st at the Park Lane Nursing Home in Scott City, Kansas. This touching tribute, written by his son, Courtney, stresses the importance of wearing a mask and the tragic consequences of ignoring basic safety protocols.

“Dr. Marvin James Farr, 81, of Scott City, Kansas, passed away Dec. 1, 2020, in isolation at Park Lane Nursing Home. He was preceded in death by more than 260,000 Americans infected with covid-19. He died in a room not his own, being cared for by people dressed in confusing and frightening ways. He died with covid-19, and his final days were harder, scarier and lonelier than necessary. He was not surrounded by friends and family.”

On the eve of Thanksgiving, the Worcester Housing Authority lost its fifth resident to the Coronavirus. She passed away alone in the hospital, without family. This resident was only 53 years old. Her family was unable to see her in her final moments, or to say goodbye.

The infection rate on our properties is growing and we continue to see residents not wearing masks and not social distancing. We are also seeing an increase in the number of visitors entering our buildings without masks. **There should not be visitors entering WHA property during this surge.** If you must have a visitor for a specific reason such as medical care, that visitor should wear a mask at all times, remain in one room, and you should disinfect the room once they leave. **Residents are responsible for ensuring their visitors are complying with WHA rules.**

Wearing a mask on WHA property is required. It is the easiest way to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and to protect yourself and the people you care about. Think about a loved one dying alone in a hospital room, without family or friends, surrounded by strangers in masks and gowns and protective gear, afraid to touch them or to hold their hand for fear of transmitting the virus to their own children and families. Put yourself in the shoes of those who have lost loved ones and remember that you can help to prevent it. It's not hard, but it is important. **Wear a mask.**

Thank you.

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THE NUMBERS

- **In Massachusetts:** As of December 3, there were 49,225 active COVID cases across the state. 1,324 patients are hospitalized and 261 are in an intensive care unit.
- **In Worcester:** Last week, Worcester saw the highest numbers of infections it has seen since the start of the pandemic, with 10,127 infections. 278 new cases were diagnosed in a single day on December 2nd. 306 Worcester residents have died from the virus.
- **At our properties**, the numbers continue to rise, particularly at our family sites and in higher numbers at **GBV, Curtis, and Lakeside Apartments. Current statistics:**
 - 28 active cases on WHA properties.
 - 20 positive for COVID-19.
 - 8 in quarantine pending results.
 - 5 WHA residents have died.

SAFETY TIPS

We are all tired of this virus, but this virus is not tired of us. Stay vigilant! Remind each other to wear your masks, distance, and be safe.

- **WEAR YOUR MASK** any time and every time you leave your private area. Wear it properly, fully covering your mouth **and** nose.
- **MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE** of at least six feet from others. Do not share food or drink. Do not shake hands or hug. Do not host or attend parties or gatherings.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS** frequently with soap and warm water. Use hand sanitizer when not near a sink or after handling items such as mail, or groceries.
- **DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE.** The virus spreads through droplets entering the mouth, nose, or eyes. The less you touch your face, the less chance of those droplets getting in!

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- **Need a COVID test?** Free testing is available via the “Stop the Spread” campaign (click here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>), or through the City of Worcester Department of Health & Human Services (click here: <https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterHHS>).
- The City of Worcester has established a **COVID-19 hotline** with up to date information, and an option to speak with a nurse. **Call 508-799-1019**, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This line is available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Albanian.
- **Infected or exposed to the virus?** Contact your Property Manager, or WHA Resident Services at 508-635-3306 for assistance and resources so you can quarantine safely.
- The WHA posts regular COVID-19 updates on its dedicated website, available here: <http://www.worcesterha.org/covid19.html>. Sign up for text alerts by texting WHACOVID to 67076.