TO: Patients, Families, Visitors and Volunteers
FROM: United Hospice, Inc.
DATE: March 16, 2020
RE: COVID-19

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United Hospice is closely monitoring the **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** and the impact on those we serve, their family members, our staff and volunteers. Their safety and health are our number one priority. As a healthcare provider, we are following the guidance provided to us by local and State Health Departments, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Center for Disease Control.

We recognize that at times like this, people often feel anxious or uneasy and questions arise. If you have any questions about COVID-19, we will answer your questions to the best of our ability, but we urge you to call the NYS Health Department's Coronavirus hotline at **888-364-3065** or visit Health.NY.Gov for additional information. For Rockland County public health notifications, please visit http://rocklandgov.com/departments/county-executive/press-releases/

The Center for Disease Control webpage dedicated to providing COVID-19 updates is as follows: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Prevention

Adherence to smart, everyday habits can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and many other viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends these everyday preventive actions which can help contain the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses:

- ❖ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- ❖ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- ❖ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❖ Stay home when you are sick.
- ❖ Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- ❖ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Some common questions, with answers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19):

Q.   **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**
A.   Common human coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses that usually last for a short amount of time with symptoms including runny nose; headache; cough; sore throat; fever and a general feeling of being unwell. In some cases, human coronaviruses can cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses such as pneumonia or bronchitis. This is more common in people with respiratory and cardiopulmonary disease, people with weakened immune systems, infants and older adults.

Q.   **How is COVID-19 diagnosed?**
A.   Anyone exhibiting a runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever with a general feeling of being unwell should call their healthcare provider to seek guidance. Importantly, notify your healthcare provider about potential exposures, such as international travel within the past 30 days. Please note United Hospice cannot test for COVID-19. Currently, testing for COVID-19 is only conducted by the New York State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and select centers. This is a rapidly changing situation and we anticipate that other testing centers will be established.

Q.   **How is COVID-19 transmitted?**
A.   COVID-19 is transmitted via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory infections are spread.

Q.   **How is COVID-19 treated?**
A.   There is no specific treatment for coronavirus at this time beyond general care one might receive for respiratory infection. Most patients with COVID-19 are at home. Those patients with severe symptoms may be hospitalized.

Q.   **Are there precautions I can take to protect myself from COVID-19?**
A.   The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Q.   **I received the flu vaccination. Will my flu shot protect me from COVID-19?**
A.   The flu vaccine is not known to prevent COVID-19.

Q.   **Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?**
A.   There is no vaccine at this time.

Q.   **Should I wear a facemask to protect myself?**
A.   The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend facemasks for those that are well to protect themselves from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The effective use of facemasks should be limited to those with flu-like symptoms or other respiratory infection.

Q.   **What precautions/actions is United Hospice taking to manage the situation?**
A.   All United Hospice staff follow stringent infection prevention protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, strict adherence to care guidelines, use of protective attire when indicated and screening of all staff volunteers, patients and visitors to the Joe Raso Hospice Residence. Multilingual (English, Spanish and Creole) signs are present at office and Joe Raso Hospice Residence entry points asking visitors to share their potential for recent exposures.