March 27, 2020

Dear Clients and Families:

CharterCARE Home Health Services is continuously monitoring the progression of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) to ensure that we have the most accurate and up-to-date information from our local, national, international and federal authorities and associations. These entities include: the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), the Healthcare Coalition of Rhode Island (HCRI), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC), Prospect Medical Holdings and the CharterCARE Incident Command System.

As you know, this situation continues to evolve rapidly as more information becomes available and as new cases are identified in our local communities. Our agency’s protocols and procedures are being carefully monitored and adjusted based upon the most updated information. Please be assured that we will continue this process and communicate any changes relative to you or your loved one’s care.

Most individuals with COVID-19 will have only mild symptoms (fever and cough). However; a small percentage of cases do become severe with rapidly progressing symptoms. This is particularly evident in the elderly and individuals with underlying medical conditions. As these individuals comprise the primary population we serve, we understand that you may have concerns about how our organization is responding to and minimizing the potential risk of COVID-19. CharterCARE Home Health Services has the following practices and procedures in place to ensure the safety of our clients and their families.

• It is standard practice that our agency has an emergency preparedness plan in place. We will continue to closely monitor the evolution of this situation and update that emergency preparedness plan accordingly.

• Our home care staff members follow established protocols regarding hand hygiene, equipment cleaning, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), monitoring their health and staying home when they are sick. These are standard practices that are well-known to our staff members.

• Staff members are not to report to work if they are deemed to be high-risk. This is determined through the assessment of any known risk factors including: travel outside of the country, exposure to family members or friends who have traveled outside of the country, travel to areas within the United States with known concentrations of COVID-19 positive residents, the presence of a fever, cough or shortness of breath.

• Current knowledge supports the fact that remaining at home is the safest option to prevent exposure to and spread of COVID-19. This virus spreads quickly in facilities, larger groups and public settings. Therefore, our ability to provide you or your loved one’s care in the safety of the home setting remains the preferred option to limit exposure to COVID-19.

• Our agency and staff will work closely with facility administrators and follow protocols and guidelines for clients residing in congregate settings such as assisted living facilities, nursing facilities or group homes.
Contingency Planning for You or Your Loved One

We will make every effort to ensure that you or your loved one receives needed care. However; given the uncertainty of our current situation and the potential response by our local and national authorities (mandatory isolation, school closures, etc.), we may experience disruptions in care. We want to assure you that we will make every effort to provide our clients with safe and appropriate care; however, staffing may be impacted during this unprecedented time.

We always recommend that our clients, family members and caregivers have alternative arrangements for the provision of care in the event our home care staff members are unable to provide services. If you have not already done so, we strongly recommend that you develop a back-up plan so you or your loved one will be cared for in the event this evolving situation prevents us from being able to visit.

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself and Your Family

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then dispose of the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect objects and frequently touched surfaces.
- Eat well, stay hydrated by drinking water and get rest to strengthen your immune system.
- Have a family emergency preparedness plan that includes care coverage and back-up support, if possible.
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill.
- If you have underlying medical conditions that increase your risk, limit your contact with others. This includes avoiding large gatherings, public areas and other places outside of the home.

We are here to support you or your loved one. Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any further questions or concerns. We want you to rest assured that we are following all of the necessary guidelines and procedures to protect the individuals we serve.

Sincerely,

Paula K. Roberge, PT
Executive Director of Home Care Services

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