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Landis Communities Update January 12, 2022

We are extremely grateful that Landis Communities residents, clients, team members and families continue to seek ways to keep each other healthy and safe. After our message last week regarding types of masks to wear in public, we have had numerous questions. We hope we can bring some clarity today by providing history and current recommendations. Please note that this information is based on recent data available. It is likely that the CDC will release new mask wearing guidance in the near future.

The **cloth masks** that so many of you helped to produce in the early phases of the pandemic, provided protection to staff when other masks could not be obtained. They were critical to our safety and so very much appreciated at the time! When supplies increased, team members switched to wearing surgical masks (or other required Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE) at work. Some continued to wear cloth masks when in public settings, as did many residents and clients. Cloth masks served as a barrier for early COVID-19 transmission but have become significantly less effective in protecting against variants of the virus, especially Omicron. Wearing a cloth mask is better than wearing no mask, but it is no longer recommended during this phase of the pandemic.

Surgical/Procedure masks have served the medical profession well for many years. With COVID-19, the general public also began wearing surgical masks to help stop the spread of the virus. They provide greater protection than a cloth mask but they may not fit tightly around the nose and cheeks. Landis Communities team members continue to follow CDC and the Department of Health guidance on PPE required at work, including the use of surgical masks for some employees. Surgical masks are currently available for purchase in limited quantities in the General Store on the Landis Homes campus. Residents at other locations may check with their on-site team member for availability. Surgical masks may not be washed. They are disposable and should be changed frequently, particularly if they become wet or dirty. Cloth masks may be worn over surgical masks for additional protection and to help with fit.

KN95 and KF94 masks are the next level of protection for the public. They provide a tighter fit and are generally comfortable to wear. These masks are not included in the guidelines for team member use at work but are recommended for team members, residents and clients when in public settings. For those not able to order these masks online or obtain them in the community, we will soon offer them for sale in the General Store on the Landis Homes campus. As with surgical masks, residents at other locations may check with their on-site team member for availability. KN95 and KF94 masks may not be washed. They are disposable and should be changed frequently, particularly if they become wet or dirty.

N95 masks are used most for team members in healthcare settings where they are fit tested for the highest level of protection from disease transmission. N95 masks are often not the most comfortable to wear and to this point have not been recommended for use by the general public, but this could change.



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Having a mask that is comfortable and will be worn consistently when around others are the most critical factors. The following scenarios are intended to help you choose an appropriate mask for everyday situations:

- If going to the trash room when it is not busy and returning to accommodation immediately, a well-fitting cloth mask is acceptable.
- If visiting with a friend or family member or riding in a car with someone, a disposable surgical mask or KN95/KF94 mask is preferred. Another option is to cover a surgical mask with cloth mask for better fit and protection.
- If going off campus into public setting such as a grocery store or doctor's office, a disposable surgical mask or KN95/KF94 mask is recommended. Another option is to cover a surgical mask with cloth mask for better fit and protection.

The need for mask wearing and other mitigation efforts are critical at this time to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In the week of January 5-11, 2022, 10 residents or clients and 38 team members have tested positive across Landis Communities.

We ask that you continue to avoid large gatherings and if you feel sick, stay home. Even minor symptoms could be COVID-19. As previously shared, if you have been in a situation where you feel you have been exposed, contact your provider/physician to find out if you should get tested. Landis Communities is not able to provide testing but is happy to share resources on where testing is available.

Team member testing is conducted when required for outbreak testing in healthcare and personal care areas as well as for exposure. Landis Communities is proactively working to acquire at home test kits to provide to staff so they are able to test, when appropriate, before reporting to work. This will not replace required outbreak testing but will supplement the efforts by identifying positive cases before a person is on site.

We appreciate your questions regarding mask wearing and are so grateful to be part of a community that cares for and supports each other.

Blessings to you for health and peace,

Larry Zook
President/CEO

Evon Bergey
Vice President Operations/COO

P.S. Residents, clients and family members may contact Jenny Sheckells with questions or concerns at jsheckells@landis.org or 717.381.3573. You may find other communications and videos on our website: www.landiscommunities.org/COVID