



June 12, 2020

To: All Still Hopes Apartment and Cottage Residents

Strong evidence is showing, in a consistent manner, that the wearing of a face mask is a really good way to prevent the spreading of the COVID-19 virus. Here at Still Hopes we made the wearing of surgical face masks mandatory for all our staff just as this evidence first began to really bear out (and when we were able to acquire the quantity of masks necessary to be able to sustain the effort 😊).

Prior to that mandate, we had the cloth masks that were so graciously made by our residents, and we strongly suggested that staff and residents wear them, but the final decision to wear was left to the individual. Today, we continue with the idea that, for our residents, this is a personal decision for each to make for themselves.

I write to you today to say that the preponderance of the evidence is showing that wearing a mask is a very effective way to stop the spread of the disease. **It seems very prudent for each of us to wear a mask whenever we are out in a public place, whether that be on the halls of our campus, or at the grocery store.**

While I realize that Still Hopes cannot mandate what you do in the community at large, and I know that I am extremely reluctant to mandate it for you when you are on our campus, I do want to strongly encourage you to wear a mask when you are around any other people. I would remind you that my admonition to you matches very closely to the admonition I give our staff members. I have taken that very hard step of mandating the masks be worn by staff while they are at work, but I can only strongly suggest this for our staff when they are off work and moving about the community.

Today, I know two very important things that you need to consider. First is that with a group of over 500 staff members, it would be foolish for me to believe that none of them goes out in public without their masks. I also am certain that several of them attend gatherings with family and friends where hugs are given and received. Let's face it, that's what we do here in Columbia, SC. And, the chances are good that some of your resident neighbors are doing the very same things. Second, there is a strong resurgence of new cases in our state. The facts are that you are more likely now, than at any other time since the virus first showed up in our state, to come into contact with a person infected with COVID-19.

Here is a to do (and 1 don't) list I want to ask you to use:

- Do wear a mask anytime you are around other people
- Do use extreme caution with your choices about attending gatherings
- Do use elbow bumps instead of hugs and kisses to greet your family and friends
- Do encourage your friends to use masks as well
- Do stay away from anyone who has any symptoms of a cold, allergies, or the flu
- Don't harass or belittle those who won't wear a mask (lung ailments of all sorts prevent their use without serious harm, and some folk are very significantly panicked by their use)

Journey On, Stay Safe, Mask Up,

Danny