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County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Release

COVID-19 Impacts more Berks Heim Residents

Reading, PA— 5/4/2020 — The Berks County Commissioners announced today that four more Berks Heim residents tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, three more residents have passed away after testing positive. To date there has been a total of twenty-one residents with confirmed COVID-19. Currently there are 15 residents with COVID-19 at the facility with one resident hospitalized. A total of five Berks Heim residents have died from COVID-19. *“It is heartbreaking to see three more Heim residents die. We continue to offer our condolences to the family and friends impacted by these deaths. Dealing with death is never easy but dealing with death in these unprecedented times is made that much more difficult,”* said Commissioner Christian Leinbach.

Key measures were in place prior to the positive test.

As previously reported, Berks Heim stopped taking visitors March 11, 2020. The facility instituted screening all employees and other approved individuals upon entering the building. These precautions include monitoring of temperatures, symptoms and following recommended guidelines to restrict access as necessary based on CDC (Centers for Disease Control), CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health standards. All staff are wearing isolation/surgical masks which serve the purpose of protecting staff and residents from the wearer should he/she be asymptomatic while carrying the virus. Residents always remain on their nursing units and in their rooms as much as possible. All needed services continue to be provided to the residents. We continue to admit new residents

to the facility only after an extensive review and approval process. New residents are admitted to a specific area to be quarantined for 14 days. We continue to follow Infection Control guidelines to maintain a safe and clean environment for the residents and staff of Berks Heim. We also have precautions in place for food preparation, delivery and service for the residents.

Actions taken to address residents testing positive for COVID-19

The residents who tested positive for COVID-19 were tested in the last few days with the results being received 5/3/2020 and 5/4/2020. The family members of the residents who tested positive have been notified along with other residents on their respective units. Additionally, employees and union leadership have been notified. Berks County and Berks Heim Management are committed to protecting the health of both our residents and our employees especially during this unprecedented health crisis.

Berks Heim will continue to provide the needed care to our residents per our Infection Control program and the guidance that has been provided daily by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), the Berks County Department of Emergency Services and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

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