

April 6, 2020**Immediate Release****Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** jcav@chsbuffalo.org

Updated Media Statement from Dr. Kevin Shiley, Catholic Health Medical Director of Infection Prevention & Control

Catholic Health received more than 900 COVID-19 rapid test kits from Cepheid Inc. last Friday, making it possible for the health system to quickly test and contain the spread of Coronavirus at Father Baker Manor in Orchard Park. In all, Catholic Health performed 600 tests throughout its system in just over one day, increasing total testing within Erie County by 29 percent.

Following testing of all patients and residents at Father Baker Manor (138 total), first in the affected subacute rehab unit and then in the long term care units, a total of 41 tests came back positive for COVID-19. Due to the number of cases in these units, additional testing was performed on staff who work at the facility through on-site and drive through testing stations. The sampling and testing was completed in 12 hours on 212 associates.

A total of 25 staff members tested positive and are in self-isolation at home until they can safely return to work. Patients who tested negative in the subacute rehabilitation unit, who were able to return home, were discharged on Friday. The remaining COVID-19 positive patients and residents identified through the rapid testing are isolated in a separate wing of the 160-bed facility. Most associates, patients and residents who tested positive reported that they felt fine.

We believe the virus entered the facility through a pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic subacute care patient who was admitted to the facility for short-term rehabilitation. Rehabilitative care generally requires close physical contact between patients, therapists and other caregivers. Evolving information on viral transmissions now indicates that pre-symptomatic individuals may be contagious days before symptoms appear, making the Coronavirus difficult to detect. Current data also suggests that 25-50% of individuals with COVID-19 may be asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic.

Father Baker Manor has been following all CDC and New York State Department of Health guidelines for COVID-19 prevention in continuing care facilities since early March, before they were mandated by the regulatory agencies. This includes suspending visitations, requiring staff to wear masks and submit to daily health screenings, increased monitoring of patients and residents for signs and symptoms of the virus, and other infection prevention measures.

When the first patient became ill, the individual was immediately placed in isolation per CDC guidelines. Because of the emerging data on asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic carriers, we also chose to go beyond Department of Health guidelines and test all patients on the affected unit. The findings revealed a very high number of patients with asymptomatic infection.

As a result, the decision was made to test the facility's other units as well as staff, not just symptomatic individuals. Our goal was to identify and isolate affected individuals as quickly as possible. We believe this aggressive action allowed us to quickly isolate positive cases on a separate nursing unit and place affected staff on self-isolation, to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

All staff caring for confirmed COVID-19 individuals are equipped with high-level PPE and following all necessary safety measures. Members of Father Baker's care team have been in contact with all family members and continue to keep them updated on the conditions of their loved ones.

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Updated Cases as of 4:30 PM:

- 102 – All Active Positive COVID-19 Critical Care & Medical Patients Within Catholic Health (does not include FBM)
- 60 – All Active Positive COVID-19 Critical Care Patients Only Within Catholic Health (does not include FBM)
- 61 – All Active Positive COVID-19 Critical Care & Medical Patients at St. Joseph Campus
- 36 – Active Positive COVID-19 Critical Care Patients Only at St. Joseph Campus
- 41 – All Active Positive COVID-19 Subacute Rehab Patients and Long Term Care Residents at Father Baker Manor
- 25 – All Active Positive COVID-19 Associates at Father Baker Manor on Self-Quarantine