

**May 5, 2020****Immediate Release****Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** [jcav@chsbuffalo.org](mailto:jcav@chsbuffalo.org)

## **Media Statement Regarding COVID Deaths at Father Baker Manor**

The 29 deaths attributed to COVID-19 at Father Baker Manor, a five-star nursing home on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov), include six that occurred at the St. Joseph Post-Acute Treatment Center in Orchard Park, which falls under the FBM license. The actual number of COVID-19 deaths at FBM is 23.

Unlike other nursing homes in WNY, Father Baker Manor has tested and retested everyone in the facility – patients, residents and staff – since its first sub-acute rehab patient tested positive for COVID-19 in early April. We believe this higher standard of testing, well beyond New York State Department of Health (DOH) requirements, has resulted in more deaths attributed to COVID-19 than other nursing homes in the region.

Non-COVID nursing home deaths are not publically reported, so it is likely COVID-related deaths may be underreported in facilities that do not extensively test their residents. It's also important to note that many facilities consider their residents COVID-free after 14 days of testing positive, even if they are not re-tested. Under this assumption, if death occurs after that time, it may not be classified as a COVID-related death. At Father Baker Manor, residents are considered COVID positive until they test negative, which for some may be after one month or more.

While every loss of life is difficult, especially for the families who are not able to be with their loved ones at this time, as well as for our extended Father Baker family, we have many elderly residents with life-limiting health conditions. Some of these residents are already receiving end-of-life comfort care or have specifically requested that they do not want extreme measures to extend their life even in the wake of the Coronavirus.

Since first reporting that FBM had a number of patients, residents and staff who tested positive for COVID-19, Catholic Health has been working closely with the New York State Department of Health. Health Department officials reviewed our testing procedures and the numerous COVID mitigation efforts we are taking to reduce the spread of the virus. We believe these efforts are serving as a model for the planned site visits the DOH is making to nursing homes across the state.

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