

Date: August 20, 2021

To: IL Residents, Team Members

From: Executive Director John Loop and the Path Forward team

Subject: Path Forward Update – Delta Variant



**THE VILLAGE AT
ORCHARD RIDGE**
A National Lutheran Community

On July 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance on the need for urgently increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage and a **recommendation for everyone in areas of substantial or high transmission to wear a mask in public indoor places, even if they are fully vaccinated**. CDC issued this new guidance due to several concerning developments and newly emerging data signals. In the days leading up to the guidance update, CDC saw a rapid and alarming rise in the COVID case and hospitalization rates around the country.

In the weeks following the CDC guidance, the Path Forward team has closely monitored local statistics. Unfortunately, Frederick County and Winchester have had an increased COVID-19 transmission and hospitalization trajectory.

The Path Forward team is a dedicated interdisciplinary group committed to carrying out its charge to determine measures and protocols, educate and communicate to all stakeholders of Orchard Ridge relating to the pandemic. As part of our diligence to determine the best course of action in light of the new statistics, we sought the advice of local doctors.

Dr. Jeffrey Feit, the Valley Health population health and community health officer and medical director of Orchard Woods Health Center, offered this counsel,

*“Thinking back over the last 18 months, it is **unquestionable that sophisticated communities utilized important public health interventions like social distancing and masking, leveraging outdoor spaces, and limiting crowd sizes to great effect**. We also know that the most vulnerable populations among us continue to be adults over 70, particularly those who are not vaccinated. While vaccines have dramatically reduced the likelihood of serious illness and death, there are still breakthrough cases, as well as people who cannot get vaccinated.*

*We are now seeing a wave of increased illness from a variant of the disease called the Delta variant. **The Delta variant is more contagious and more dangerous than its predecessor**. While effective vaccination prevented up to 95% of all disease from the original coronavirus variant, that number appears to be substantially lower regarding Delta. Subsequently, we can expect to see mild disease within our community, even amongst the vaccinated population. For the time being, **prudence dictates that we resume wearing masks in indoor spaces and while in groups** to reduce the likelihood that a vulnerable member of our community could experience a severe case of COVID.”*

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MEMORANDUM

We appreciate Dr. Feit's consultation and used it to inform us, but we sought additional advice from the district epidemiologist of the Loud Fairfax Health District, Dr. Clarissa Bonnefond. She responded,

*"As of today, August 18, 2021, Frederick County and the City of Winchester have a **high transmission level**. Every locality in Virginia, except for two, is in either **substantial or high transmission**. Because community immunity levels are not high enough to contain the spread of the Delta variant, cases are surging, and additional public health mitigation efforts, such as the **use of masks, are needed**."*

Our two local experts are like-minded in their judgment. From the beginning of the pandemic, we have used CDC guidance to direct our decisions. The CDC offers the following information on the Delta variant on its website:

Masks

Given what we know about the Delta variant, vaccine effectiveness, and current vaccine coverage, layered prevention strategies, such as wearing masks, are needed to reduce the transmission of this variant.

- At this time, as we build the level of vaccination nationwide, we must also use all the prevention strategies available, including masking indoors in public places, to stop transmission and stop the epidemic.
- Vaccines are playing a crucial role in limiting spread of the virus and minimizing severe disease. Although vaccines are highly effective, they are not perfect, and there will be vaccine breakthrough infections. Millions of Americans are vaccinated, and that number is growing. This means that even though the risk of breakthrough infections is low, there will be thousands of fully vaccinated people who become infected and able to infect others, especially with the surging spread of the Delta variant. Low vaccination coverage in many communities is driving the current rapid and large surge in cases associated with the Delta variant, which also increases the chances that even more concerning variants could emerge.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/delta-variant.html>

With all of these facts and expert advice, the Path Forward team and John Loop, the executive director, have decided that not just team members but residents, too, **must return to wearing masks in public areas effective immediately**. We unanimously came to this decision with a sense of urgency and concern. This does not change what you do in your own apartment or cottage, but we must each wear masks to protect one another in all public areas.

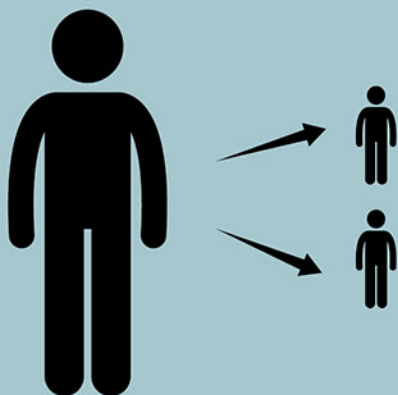
Programming will not change of now, but we may reduce the number of people in certain classes. The following are noteworthy changes:

- **The only public space that will not require wearing a mask is in the pool.**
- Masks must be worn on the pool deck but can be taken off to use the pool.
- Transportation services will expect you to wear a mask if you ride in an Orchard Ridge vehicle.
- Dining areas will require masks unless you are seated and eating or drinking.
- The chapel, enrichment studios, hallways, gathering spaces and all open indoor spaces will require wearing masks.

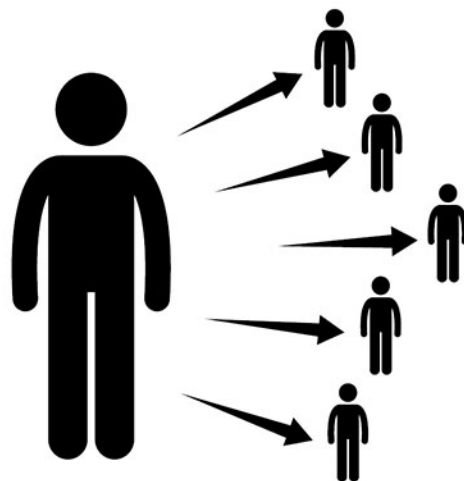
It is always possible that further changes may need to be made because your safety, the safety of our team members and the safety of all of vendors and guests to Orchard Ridge are of utmost importance to us. We are committed to researching, reviewing, and understanding critical information and data about the virus. We are also committed to providing you timely communication and education. The Path Forward team is meeting weekly and continues to be intentional to make the best decisions possible for our community. We thank you for your partnership and ask you to remain confident in our work together.

The Delta variant is more contagious than previous strains—it may cause more than **2x** as many infections

ORIGINAL COVID-19 STRAIN



DELTA VARIANT



Vaccines protect you from hospitalization, severe infections, and death



cdc.gov/coronavirus