



April 24, 2020

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES WE PROUDLY SERVE FROM WELLSPRING PRESIDENT & CEO DAVE GEHM:

Since the beginning of March, Wellspring Lutheran Services has been operating under a comprehensive emergency plan that was established in response to COVID-19. As a statewide nonprofit with more than 1,300 employees serving in 53 of Michigan's 83 counties, we knew our plan needed to be robust, strategic and grounded in exceptional clinical oversight. We operationalized the protocols issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and retrained on our already stringent infectious disease protocols at every level of our organization.

On Friday, April 3, Wellspring was notified that COVID-19 had officially entered our organization when one of our residents at our skilled nursing facility in Frankenmuth tested positive for the virus. While we knew we would not be immune to the impact of this virus, it was a difficult day for the Wellspring family to know that one of our beloved residents was now going to fight this battle. Like many of the stories you have read throughout the country, once it entered our building, it quickly spread — despite the guidelines and protocols that were in place. We currently have 42 residents in our 112-bed facility test positive. And sadly, we have had to say goodbye as we have lost 14 of our residents who had become like family to us.

Less than 20 minutes away, our memory support unit on our senior living campus in Saginaw is battling the same virus — and feeling its impact in a similar way. We currently have five residents who have tested positive for COVID-19. Sadly, we have had to say goodbye to six of our residents there, who also were like family to us.

Like most of America, the Wellspring family is grieving. Despite the thousands of people who are healthy and doing well because of the care they are receiving from us, the heaviness that comes from knowing that you have had to say goodbye to people you love is tremendous. The families of our residents are an unbelievably important part of what makes Wellspring so special, and the fact that we must grieve separately is incredibly hard. Wellspring has been walking alongside people for more than 125 years on some of their darkest days. And we won't stop now.

This virus is indiscriminate, which has only strengthened our resolve as an organization to always serve people and communities in need of support. That's why in Frankenmuth we have operationalized our COVID Recovery Unit, and we are seeing optimistic results. Each day we have residents moving off of the unit and safely back into their rooms. They are well on their way to making a full recovery, and for that we rejoice.

We would like to humbly thank so many people who have continued to walk with us on this journey. A special thank you goes out to the health department, our local hospitals, local officials and the communities we serve. Your encouragement and unwavering support,

Hope flows through us.

despite your own fears and trials, is just another reason to be confident that we will get through this — together.

While we continue our commitment to being transparent about this difficult journey, our focus remains on our staff, residents and their families. (Please view our weekly video update here: <https://youtu.be/IBD31Cooi8s>.) We appreciate your understanding, as many of our staff and families have not had time to fully grieve the impact this virus has had on our tight-knit communities. We covet your prayers during this time.

Sincerely,



DAVID M. GEHM
President & CEO

***Please note that the information in this letter is as of 4/24/2020*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Media inquiries may be sent to Jill Haiser, vice president for mission advancement, at jhaiser@wellspringlutheran.com

For more information regarding our efforts related to COVID-19, please visit wellspringlutheran.com/covid-19

Wellspring Lutheran Services is a statewide nonprofit committed to engaging people at every stage of life to help them experience and embrace their God-given potential. For more than 125 years, Wellspring has been helping change lives, build strong families and transform communities through a diverse set of services including: adoption resources, affordable housing, assisted living, family preservation, foster care, home care, hospice and grief support, independent living, memory support, parenting support, short-term rehabilitation, skilled nursing care and supportive housing for youths. More than 1,300 employees carry out our work statewide, impacting people in more than 50 of Michigan's 83 counties.