



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Maureen Leader | mleader@willowvalley.org | 717.464.6288
WillowValleyCommunities.org | LifeLivedForward.org

August 6, 2020

For Immediate Release

Willow Valley Communities Unwavering in Resolve to Mitigate COVID-19 *Remains Steadfast in Commitment to Residents, Families*

Lancaster, PA – “Willow Valley Communities is unrelenting in its commitment to residents and their families in the fight against COVID-19,” said John G. Swanson, CEO of Willow Valley Living, the management company for Willow Valley Communities.

“Any death brought about by COVID-19 is a tragedy and we share in the families’ deep sorrow and mourn the loss of our residents,” he added. “Although our hearts are heavy, Willow Valley Communities remains steadfast in our pledge to continue to protect our residents against this virus. Our dedicated, compassionate teams are on the front lines aggressively applying established guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.”

Since the advent of COVID-19, the premier 55-plus senior living community in Lancaster, PA has adhered to, and often gone beyond, recommendations and guidance issued and updated frequently by recognized government and health authorities such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State of Pennsylvania, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and others to protect our residents and Team members. The WHO declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic on March 11; Willow Valley Communities began putting protocols in place in response to the threat as early as February 2020.

Members of a Willow Valley Communities’ COVID-19 Response Team, formed early this year, have met frequently to examine ways to improve our containment of COVID-19. The team comprises members of the Willow Valley Communities’ Infection Control Committee (including expertise and advisement from Lancaster General Hospital/Penn Medicine), the organization’s Medical Director, Willow Valley Communities’ senior leadership, and applicable department heads. The Response Team actively and continuously reviews procedures and policies and modifies them as needed. These include daily safety protocols, testing, personal protective equipment (PPE), team education, best practices, restriction of staff movement, and cleaning and sanitation actions.

—MORE—

As part of its aggressive efforts to mitigate the risk of further COVID-19 spread, Willow Valley Communities has researched and purchased hi-tech sanitation equipment intended to help kill or detect signs of the virus. Recent purchases include SAM 400 Portable Air Disinfection Devices, Clorox Total 360 System Electrostatic Sprayers, UV Sterilizer Cabinets, UV Light Sanitizer Wands, FLIR Handheld Thermal Cameras for screening, and Accushield Sign-In Kiosks for screening at concierge desks.

A July 22, 2020 unannounced survey visit by The Pennsylvania Department of Health to Willow Valley Communities' skilled care communities, Lakeside and The Glen, identified zero deficiencies, meaning that state inspectors found that all established and mandated policies, procedures, and protocols were being followed. Inspectors spoke highly of the team's performance and the prevention measures in place. At the conclusion of their visit, the state inspectors said they were not able to offer any constructive recommendations for improvement to Willow Valley Communities beyond our measures already in place.

All of the COVID-19 attributed deaths at Willow Valley Communities have occurred in the organization's skilled care communities, where residents largely have pre-existing, underlying health conditions. Among Lancaster County long term care facilities that have reported COVID-19 attributed deaths, Willow Valley Communities has had the least, by a significant margin, as a percentage of the resident population in those facilities.

Those who have passed away at Willow Valley Communities were older, medically compromised residents with comorbidities. In some of these cases, COVID-19 was the primary cause of their death as determined by the county coroner. For others, COVID-19 was listed as a secondary cause of death. The medical community has acknowledged that comorbidities and age increase the risk of death from COVID-19. The average age of the Willow Valley Communities residents who passed away is 92 years.

Swanson says he is encouraged by the fact that most residents who tested positive for COVID-19 have recovered from their illness. As of August 6, among the 2,400 residents at Willow Valley Communities, there are 10 active cases of COVID-19.

Over its 35 years history, Willow Valley Communities has earned a widely known tradition of trust and excellence within Lancaster County and across the nation. It has been recognized many times by organizations both within and outside of the senior living industry for its premier lifestyle and care. In addition to the zero deficiency score from the unannounced July 22, 2020 visit, PA Department of Health inspections for all of 2019 and 2020 to-date have likewise resulted in zero deficiencies.

Willow Valley Communities has been and continues to be one of the most successful Lancaster County senior living communities in fighting COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Lancaster County on March 18, and the first death in a Lancaster County nursing home was reported March 30. The first passing of a Willow Valley Communities resident attributed to COVID-19 was July 14.

Swanson is further encouraged by these statistics, and also by the positive comments received from PA Department of Health inspectors during their recent unannounced visit. He is also gratified that so many residents and their families have reached out to Willow Valley Communities to offer praise and gratitude for the community's handling of the pandemic. "Praise and kudos to the administrators and team members in handling the COVID-19 situation," said one resident.

###

For more information, contact:

Maureen Leader

Public Relations and Communications Manager, Willow Valley Communities

600 Willow Valley Square

Lancaster, PA 17602-4866

717.464.6288

Willow Valley Communities, Lancaster, PA was founded in 1984. An award winning, not-for-profit, independently operated continuing care retirement community (CCRC), it is nationally recognized as a senior living destination for residents from 37 states. Residences at Willow Valley Communities range from 600 to 3,200 square feet with more than 90 floor plans for apartments, townhomes, and villas. Amenities include an 80,000 square foot Cultural Center with 500 seat performing arts theatre, aquatic and fitness centers, day spa, and a 30,000 square foot Clubhouse with tennis and pickle ball courts, bowling alleys, golf simulator, and vintage arcade. Willow Valley Communities' comprehensive Lifecare Agreement provides supportive care, if needed, without an increase to the resident's monthly service fee.

For more information, call 800.770.5445 or visit <http://www.WillowValleyCommunities.org>.