

Frequently Asked Questions: Coronavirus Response Efforts at A.G. Rhodes

As of April 15, 2020

Does A.G. Rhodes have confirmed cases of COVID-19?

We currently have confirmed cases in our three A.G. Rhodes locations. We are posting updates, including number of confirmed cases, online at www.agrhodes.org/coronavirus.

Can you give us specific information about who has tested positive for COVID-19?

We know this is incredibly stressful and worrisome, and you have many concerns and questions about your loved one's risk of contracting COVID-19 based on potential exposure to someone who tests positive. We've received many questions asking for specific details about who has tested positive and who they've come in contact with. These are understandable questions, but to protect the privacy of residents and staff, and in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, we cannot disclose the names of individuals who test positive, or other details that would identify them.

Given the highly infectious nature of this virus, we must operate on the assumption that every resident and staff member could have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. This is why we have such stringent measures in place including employee screening, and multiple temperature checks and assessments on each resident every day, among other measures outlined in this FAQs.

Are more cases expected to emerge?

Given the nature of this highly infectious disease, we expect more cases to emerge. We are awaiting COVID-19 test results for several residents and staff and we anticipate more positive cases. We are in contact with those family members with suspected cases. If more cases emerge, we will continue communicating with family members of those tested.

As this situation progresses, we will post updates online at www.agrhodes.org/coronavirus.

What are you doing to stop the spread?

There were many measures in place in our communities to stop the spread of this virus before positive COVID-19 cases emerged. In addition to visitor restriction—which has been in place since March 12—additional measures include:

Infection Prevention & Control. We continue to implement stringent infection prevention and control measures, frequent hand washing and cleaning of our buildings and surfaces, and extra precaution when caring for residents, especially residents exhibiting any symptoms of illness regardless of the nature of those symptoms.

Screening. We screen all staff and essential personnel who enter our buildings, including temperature checks. If someone's temperature is elevated or if they display other symptoms, they are instructed to leave and follow up with their doctor.

Closely monitoring residents and isolating those exhibiting symptoms. Even before our first confirmed cases, we designated an area of in each of our three homes to closely monitor some residents for

symptoms of COVID-19. This area allows us to more safely isolate residents who are at greater risk of testing positive for COVID-19.

Because of the highly infectious nature of this virus and that it impacts people so differently, we are closely monitoring all our residents for symptoms and we are conducting regular temperature checks and routine assessments. While we immediately move residents displaying symptoms to the designated areas to be isolated, we may also send residents immediately to the hospital depending on the severity of their symptoms.

Closely monitoring staff. Staff are instructed not to report to work if they are feeling ill, and if they report to work and do not pass the screening, they are immediately sent home and instructed to contact their doctor. If a staff member feels ill during their shift, they are instructed to immediately go home and contact their doctor. We follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for evaluating when and if it is safe for a staff member to come back to work.

Social distancing. Prior to the confirmed COVID-19 cases and because of the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, we drastically changed our activities and communal events to align with social distancing guidance and directives from numerous organizations and agencies including the CDC, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), and Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH).

How are you treating people suspected of having COVID-19?

Any treatment is done in close coordination with the medical directors and attending physicians in our homes. As soon as someone begins exhibiting symptoms, they are moved to the designated area or sent to the hospital, depending on the severity of their symptoms. It's important to note that this virus has the potential to impact people very differently. Some people develop milder symptoms, while some develop very serious symptoms immediately without much warning. While we may be able to care for some people in our homes who test positive, some may need more acute care in a hospital setting.

Are all your residents and staff going to be tested?

In accordance with CDC guidelines, those people assessed as appropriate for testing are receiving COVID-19 tests. As more people are tested, we expect to see an increase in number of positive cases, as well as confirm many who test negative for the virus. We will continue communicating with family members whose loved ones are tested, including the results of their loved one's test.

Are your staff wearing masks?

Yes, and we follow CDC guidelines concerning masks and other personal protective equipment. In accordance with these guidelines, we update our processes as additional measures are identified that will help us better safeguard residents and staff.

I heard members of the Georgia National Guard are being deployed to nursing homes in Georgia. Are they coming to A.G. Rhodes, and if so, when are they coming? What will they be doing?

You may have heard Governor Brian Kemp announce in early April that members of the Georgia National Guard are being deployed to assist long-term care health facilities with their COVID-19 response efforts. [Click here](#) for his announcement.

We have accepted the National Guard's help and teams have been to all our homes. These specially-trained infection control teams follow protocols of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the health department to decontaminate and disinfect areas of the building using a disinfectant process that incorporates a solution approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). [Click here](#) to read more about these efforts. The process takes several hours and then the team departs.

Who are you providing information to concerning the number of cases you have at A.G. Rhodes?

In these unprecedented times, we have made concerted efforts to communicate as transparently and frequently as possible with our families and others in the community. We are emailing, texting and updating our website regularly, including the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases in our homes. This information is also reported as required to organizations such as the Georgia DPH, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), and CMS.

How can I help?

We've had many requests from the community asking how they can help support our residents during this challenging time. To see some ideas, visit www.agrhodes.org/ways-to-help. If you have ideas that you'd like to share, email waystohelp@agrholders.org.

What else?

We know that this is an incredibly challenging time and you have many concerns and fears about loved ones staying in our communities. We assure you that we are doing everything we can to keep residents and staff safe. This virus presents many unique challenges, but we have well-trained and dedicated teams that are taking every feasible measure to stop its spread.

Please continue following our updates at www.agrhodes.org/coronavirus.

I have more questions, who do I contact?

Families with questions should use the contact methods on our "For Families" section of this webpage, www.agrhodes.org/coronavirus.

Members of the media should contact Mary Newton, Chief Communications Officer, at mnewton@agrholders.org.

If the methods above don't apply to you, please use our [Contact Us Form](#).