

October 19, 2020

Dear fellow team members:

**You continue to inspire me with your leadership and commitment to our mission of serving older adults in the spirit of Christian love.** The elders and their families are blessed by your unselfish care. These times are more trying than any have been in any of our lifetimes and you amaze me every day.

It is hard to believe we have been dealing with the COVID-19 virus for over eight months. We never imagined it would last this long. Sadly, the whole thing has become politicized, and that impacts all of us. It is clear that the virus is the virus. It is not Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, red or blue. Despite what you may have heard, there is not an evil sinister plot to manipulate the data about the virus. It is real. It is a scientific fact that today there have been almost 8.2 million cases of COVID-19 in the United States, with, as I write this, 219,811 deaths. Mississippi actually has one of the highest rates of infections and deaths in the country. We are not doing very well at all, and the current data in Mississippi is that our trend over the last two weeks has increased. On July 27 we peaked at 1,361 new cases. Last Thursday we saw a spike to 1,322 new cases in Mississippi. All of the science and data point to hard times this fall and winter. **We are not out of the woods yet.**

In spite of our best efforts the virus has had an impact on those we care for. Across our twelve campuses 107 elders have gotten sick with it, and sadly, 25 have died. We all grieve for each of those losses, especially the team members who cared for them. 125 of our team members have had the virus. **It is real and the losses are real.**

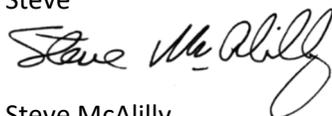
These times are not good for the people for whom we care. We know now that the best protection is washing hands, socially distancing, and wearing masks. One study says a mask is as good as a vaccine. But it is not perfect, and despite our efforts some people still get sick. **It is more important now than ever for each of us to practice these habits wherever we go, not just at work.**

We have also recognized the extreme effects of elders not being able to have visits by family and friends—the isolation and loneliness is in some cases as bad as the virus itself. And the fact that we are beginning to allow visiting by families on our campuses requires us to be even more protective. But visiting is conditioned upon what happens on our campuses and, in the larger communities where they are located. If there are outbreaks we will be compelled to stop the visits.

**My challenge to you is to keep inspiring us! Keep your focus.** Remember why we do what we do. Be safe when you are not at work. Take a break and take care of yourself. We can do this. And remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, as recorded in Galatians, chapter 6, verse 9: **“Do not grow weary of doing good for we will reap a harvest if we don’t give up.”**

Love,

Steve



Steve McAlilly  
President and CEO