

COVID-19 Response Update - 3/31/2020

From Beth Goldstein, Bethel CEO

Dear Bethel Staff,

In Governor Cuomo's Sunday press conference regarding COVID-19, he spent some time recognizing the dedication of front line workers and first responders in NY, as well as describing the special challenge of keeping nursing home residents safe from the Coronavirus.

He called the work of those on the front lines "acts of love and courage" because just like everyone else, these workers are afraid, too. "But there is something more important than their fear," says the governor. "And that is their passion, their commitment for public service and helping others. And that's all it is. Their passion and belief in helping others, overcomes their fears. He continued, "That makes them, in my book, just truly amazing and outstanding human beings."

Governor Cuomo also shared that the number of confirmed cases in NY was 59,513 and that a quarter of those cases are nursing home residents.

And although this is almost 15,000 seniors, Governor Cuomo said, "We are lucky that it's only a quarter. Coronavirus in a nursing home is a toxic mix. This virus preys on the vulnerable, it preys on our seniors and it preys on people with compromised immune systems and underlying conditions." He continued, "COVID-19 in a nursing home can be like fire through dry grass."

He mentioned some of the precautionary measures which were implemented, with this vulnerability in mind, to combat COVID-19 and keep nursing home residents safe such as the "no visitor" policy, staff being screened each time they enter the building and an extensive focus on infection control. With these policies in place and other efforts, the governor hopes to fight the spread of COVID-19 among the nursing home populations.

At Bethel, we have also been emphasizing, from day one, how critical infection control is to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Our staff is well-versed in these protocols and the need to comply with all guidelines. They are also apprised of any changes in these practices when the Department of Health updates them. We are also doing our best to provide staff with the needed PPE supplies, as well, to keep everyone safe.

And when Governor Cuomo talks about front line staff, we know what he's talking about because we see it with our own employees. Our front line employees come in every day and put their fears aside so they can put the residents first. We know how hard that is, leaving their own families at home, hoping they will be safe, and worrying about the changes going on all around and what that means to their immediate and future lives.

Thank you so much for everything you are doing to care for our residents during this stressful time. It is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Beth Goldstein