



August 6, 2021

Dear IL Residents and Staff Members:

Our commitment to you from the start of the pandemic has been to provide timely and transparent communication about occurrences in our county and community. The content enclosed is lengthy; offering important information about covid-19 and its variants, as well as upcoming changes to IKF services. We recognize that there is a lot of information to take in. Should you have any questions, please reach out the IKF Covid-19 Hotline at (240)-499-0477 or ikfhotline@inglesideonline.org.

COVID Delta Variant

The CDC Data shows that the Delta is different than past versions of the coronavirus: **it is much more contagious**. Some vaccinated people can transmit Delta in a breakthrough, contagious infection.

Of the coronavirus cases that are sequenced at Maryland labs, nearly all are delta variant infections, according to the Maryland Department of Health. Nationwide, the delta variant and its sub-lineages account for as much as **93% of all cases**, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest genomic surveillance data.

Transmission of Covid-19 in Montgomery County

'Substantial transmission' is defined as 50 to 99 cases per day per 100,000 people, according to the CDC. Montgomery County has a population of 1.05 million, meaning about 75 cases per day for a seven-day period or 525 cases in a week qualifies as substantial transmission.

There have been 605 cases reported in the past week, according to the county's data — that's 57.6 cases per 100,000 county residents in the past week **placing Montgomery County, Maryland, in the substantial transmission category.**

Mandatory Mask-Wearing in Montgomery County

In response to the growing number of cases in the county, the Montgomery County Council voted on Thursday, August 5th, **that everyone will be required to wear masks indoors in Montgomery County regardless of vaccination status.** These changes will go into effect immediately on Saturday, August 7th at 12:00AM.

Allan Massie, an epidemiologist and biomedical researcher at the Johns Hopkins School of

Medicine, called an indoor mask mandate for the unvaccinated and vaccinated “sensible” for the time being. “Case counts are increasing and unfortunately we don’t have good data on breakthrough cases as they are happening,” said Massie about fully vaccinated people who test positive for COVID-19.

Massie is one of those cases. He was infected last month along with 10 other fully vaccinated people at a small house party in Montgomery County, where community transmission at the time was below the CDC threshold where indoor masking is recommended [Source: Baltimore Sun].

COVID-19 Updates at IKF

Mask-Wearing

In accordance with Montgomery County guidelines and to safeguard the community, **IKF will require that all residents wear a mask whenever they exit their apartment effect Saturday, August 7th.** We recommend wearing an ear-looped mask; whether cloth, surgical, or N-95. Scarves, gators and bandanas do not provide adequate protection. As you continue to meet in person with each other for bridge, art programs, and committee meetings, we ask that you please always commit to wearing your masks. If you see that a neighbor has forgotten their mask, gently remind them. Extra cloth masks will be available at each concierge desk.

- If an IKF employee, private duty aide or contractor is coming in to your apartment, please wear a mask.
- Masks will also be required when utilizing IKF transportation. We ask that when you venture out into the larger community, whether you are in a county that requires face coverings or not, that you continue to wear your masks.
- Masks must be worn coming and going to the pool, on the pool deck and in the restroom, but may be removed when actively swimming.
- Masks must be worn going to and from dining venues, while waiting in line and walking through these spaces, but may be removed when you are seated and actively eating and drinking.
- Staff, guests, vendors, private duty aides and contractors will continue to wear masks while on campus. If you notice that someone is not wearing their mask indoors while on campus, please call the concierge at 240-499-9015.

Guests in Dining Spaces

Effective **Monday, August 9th, 2021, guests will no longer be permitted to eat and drink indoors in our dining areas.**

- The Coffee Shop, Courtyard Café and Bistro will remain open for in-person dining but will be for resident use only.
- Guests are welcome to join you in your apartment or at one of our outdoor tables.

Catered Events at IKF

Because mask wearing is such an integral part of stopping the spread of covid-19, **IKF will only permit food and drinks to be consumed in dining areas** (Coffee Shop, Courtyard Café, Bistro, and outdoor tables).

- Food and drink will not be permitted to be consumed in communal areas of the community or event spaces such as the Cultural Arts Center, Club Room, Art Studio, Classrooms, Atrium, Game Room, Card Room, 701 Lounge, lounges, etc.
- To that end, effective **Monday, August 9, 2021, IKF will suspend catering services at public and private events including private parties, memorial services, events and programs, committee meetings, and community forums.**

Social Distancing in Program Spaces

Effective Monday, August 9th, 2021, program spaces will be set up with chairs and tables socially distanced (six feet apart). We ask that you please do not move furniture around once it has been placed.

- If you have a Zoom alternative to attending an in-person program, such as with fitness classes, committee meetings, etc.; we encourage you to attend virtually.
- IKF buses and vans will continue to operate, but with increased space between riders.

Singing Indoors

Because singing can expel virus-infected droplets into the air — and these droplets are known to accumulate and linger in the air for a sustained period, IKF has made the difficult decision to **suspend indoor singing effective Monday, August 9, 2021.**

- We will continue to work closely with our Cultural Arts Committee on virtual or outdoor alternatives for singing and remain grateful for the flexibility and ingenuity this committee has shown the past 17 months.
- For questions regarding singing during worship services, please contact our Chaplain, Rachel Schwartz at 240-499-9294

Required Weekly Testing of All Unvaccinated Employees

While our employee vaccination rate remains high at just under 94%, effective Friday, August 6, 2021, **we will require the weekly testing of all unvaccinated health center and independent living employees.**

- The tests will be conducted by members of our Nursing Department.
- Any employee who tests positive will return home immediately to self-isolate and follow CDC guidelines.
- Any employee who refuses testing will be temporarily taken off the schedule until they are either fully vaccinated or comply with weekly testing.

Looking to the Future

The IKF Leadership team, in partnership with our resident Healthcare Committee, will continue to follow the county positivity rate and all county restrictions closely. If numbers rise, restrictions will increase. This may include the cancelation of some trips to highly crowded events, large-scale community programming, and visitor restrictions. We will do everything we can to keep programs and services open, if it is safe to do so.

Support Services

Sadly, we have all been here before and we know the effect of the disheartening news. Over the past week, we have also witnessed residents coming forward and asking us to make changes sooner, rather than later, to enforce mask wearing before the mandate and inquiring about platforms to assist the IKF leadership team. We continue to be moved by the spirit of this community-the spirit of IKF.

If you or someone you know is struggling with the above changes, please be kind, patient and understanding. Many are experiencing grief and burn-out from these last 17 months. Nilou Rahmi, our IL Social Worker, and Rachel Schwartz, our IKF Chaplain, are only a phone call away and are available as a support to all; staff and residents, alike. They can be reached at 240-499-9298 and 240-499-9294, respectively.

As always, we are confident and hopeful that Brighter Days Ahead.

Kind regards,

Michelle F. Kraus
Executive Director

Kate Kavitski
Independent Living Administrator

Cody Christian
Community Director of Healthcare Services