March 16, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you read in the latest edition of the Melmark Moments, Melmark New England has closed all day programs beginning March 16, 2020 through March 27, 2020. The closure aligns with MA Governor Charlie Baker’s order that all public schools close, and that visitors not be allowed in long-term care facilities and nursing homes in the state. **Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines of social/physical distancing, Melmark is not allowing visitors to any of its residences or program areas at this time, effective today.** Families are encouraged to schedule Facetime or Skype video calls with their loved ones.

While there are currently **no cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) within any of Melmark’s programs,** we are working to limit physical contact for all individuals at Melmark as a preventative measure. Melmark’s senior leadership team continues to closely monitor evolving information coming from our state and national leaders, as well as from the CDC, as we evaluate when visitors will be allowed and when day programs will reopen.

Currently, the individuals served in Melmark’s residential programs will remain in their Melmark homes. Staff are working to ensure all residential individuals are limited to small groups of three to four peers and are identifying creative activities to ensure engagement.

Families are being contacted by Melmark staff to inquire about the ability to take their individual who resides with us home for a period of time. This information will be assessed in order to be prepared in the event of a confirmed case within our community.

If a family chooses to take their loved one home, we are not in a position to accept them back until we are ready to re-open our day programs. While our residences remain open at this time, this situation is evolving every day and we need to ensure health and safety by controlling entrance into the residences. We are considering all alternatives in an effort to keep our residences open and safe for the most fragile individuals we serve. This becomes a challenge with the need for our workforce to be present every day to operate 24/7 services.

Organizationally, we have been working hard to acquire the necessary Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and sanitization supplies in order to be prepared on a daily basis. This has become increasingly difficult given the shortages of supplies at this time.

We will continue to update you and ask for your patience and cooperation as we navigate this evolving issue.

Sincerely,

Helena Maguire