

Message from CEO



COVID-19 and the Holidays

Dear Families and Guardians,

This has been a year of tremendous sacrifice. We have all waited, and hoped, for an end to COVID-19. It has cost so many lives and continues to claim more by the day. It has changed all of our lives in ways big and small.

COVID has also brought out the best in us. Our DSPs have tirelessly protected your loved ones, day in and day out. Your partnership with your local teams has been invaluable. So many of you have been there to make life easier in the homes and have stayed in touch with your loved one the best you can. It has made all the difference.

As 2020 draws to a close, there is hope on the horizon with the promise of a lifesaving vaccine. Yet COVID is not done with us. We need to dig deep within ourselves and be more diligent than ever. As a country we have now passed 250,000 people who have died in connection with COVID-19, a grim milestone that will only grow. The health and lives of your loved ones and staff are at greater risk than at any time since the pandemic began.

With that in mind, we are strongly advising you not to take your loved ones home during the holidays, even for a few hours. This is for everyone's safety. I know this is an incredibly difficult request, given this special time of year. While visits are happening today in a few locations, we will likely need to tighten restrictions soon. There may be additional limitations depending on location.

I honestly understand why this may be difficult to hear. Please know that the leadership team is solely responsible for these decisions. I am saddened that some of our local teams have borne the brunt of criticism by parents and guardians for decisions about lockdowns and limitations. The work in the homes is really hard, physically and emotionally, and can seem never ending. Adding COVID protocols greatly increases our DSPs' burden. They are doing their jobs and doing their best. I recognize the frustration, and kindly ask that concerns be addressed with leadership and not the frontline staff. Thank you in advance.

At this critical time, we are asking everyone to tap their reserves of self-discipline and compassion. I want to see my family too and to move as freely as I did before. But I know it's not safe. If we can all do the right thing right now, more of us will be able to celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas and all the other holidays in the future. I know this is a difficult time, but we will get through this together.

Thank you for being part of the Bethesda Family.

Regards,

Mike Thirtle, Ph.D.

President and CEO