



To important Stakeholders in Eldercare,

The following message is one that we have been sharing with everyone at Prairie Senior Cottages for over a week. Included in these statements are the concerns of caregivers during this unprecedented time for medical personnel.

Message to all PSC Staff: (almo

Hi, I am Dustin Lee, President of Prairie Senior Cottages.

I have had the pleasure to have meet most of you. For those I have not yet met, I would like to share a little bit about my background and where I come from. You will see that we have a lot in common. Like you, I have been a Caregiver. I started caregiving in 1986 working with folks who couldn't dress, bath, feed, or toilet themselves. And like so many of you, I was born to a single mom. She was a nurse's aide at a nursing home in Mankato. Ironically, when my mom passed, she passed in the nursing home she worked in. We were like many of our Cottage Heroes, we struggled financially. Where we lived, was truly, on the wrong side of the tracks, next to a river, right next to a factory. We were barely getting by month to month. We lived there because we could not afford a car and it was somewhat near to where my mom worked. This way my mom could walk to work, to earn an income, to provide for me, her baby son.

Folks, we are living in unprecedented times.....Our President has declared a National Emergency, we have a worldwide pandemic. Millions of people are at risk of losing their jobs, and millions are at risk of dying. Getting through these unparalleled times will not be easy. But we will get through, and we will be better and stronger for it. When we get past this, we will have much for which to be thankful.

Now more than ever, these times require extraordinary leadership. And that leadership starts with you. You are all leaders, every single one of you. What you do, the small choices you make now, will make the difference between people living and dying. **Lives are in your hands; I truly mean that.**

All employees who work at PSC are asked to sign our SAFE CARE PLEDGE: This is an OATH, A PROMISE. Joseph Campbell is famous for saying "A Hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." Heroes are selfless. You are giving and sharing your life for something greater than yourself. At PSC we work with Heroes every day doing extraordinary things. **This is why we say, "Everyone here is someone's hero."**

I suspect none of us saw the COVID virus changing our world as it did. And these changes may be lasting. No one can say with certainty when this National Emergency will end, or how it will end. No one. As of today, over 20 million people in the US recently saw their income drastically reduced, or worse, many became unexpectedly unemployed.

Over 25 percent of the country is basically in some form of home quarantine. Some predict that as many as 60 million jobs are at risk of being lost. I can only pray they are wrong.

Many of us remember the great recession. Some may recall, the job losses experienced through the great recession took a decade to recover, to return. Those who are unemployed, they must be in our prayers. They, like you, are hurting. I know many of you are scared. Many of you are hurting as is much of our nation. And I like you, we are hurting too. Together, **WE WILL get through this.**

Many of you know I have served our Nation during war. I led a squad of 11 men and women. Of those 11, 7 earned Purple Hearts. All gave some, and one by the name of Luke Frist, gave all. If you have ever wondered what a soldier experiences in war, this is it. You are as close to war as war can be. But this is different, usually in war, you see the enemy. This time, you are fighting an invisible enemy.

An invisible enemy may make the threat seem less real. **BUT IT'S A REAL THREAT!** I would argue this makes our type of war more difficult. I asked an Army friend what he thought was worse, our time in Iraq, or the pandemic? He said in Iraq he wasn't worried about protecting his family, but he is now. He said this is harder. You are a leader, and right now you may not realize it, but you are soldier. You are the front line and first line of defense in **keeping this virus out of our buildings. You are the front line in protecting society's most vulnerable adults, those we have chosen to serve.**

Our residents and families are counting on every single one of you and your leadership. Your collective decisions and behavior to protect other's family treasure are now more important than ever. We must pay attention to the details. You may make the difference between those who live, and those who die. Right now, for the safety of our residents, families cannot come and visit. **Families are scarred and they are counting on you to protect their family treasure.**

During times like this, we all need to lift each other up, and try to make the world a better place. We are blessed to have such a great group of people meeting the needs of other families, their family treasure, day in, day out.

We must be prepared for harder times are ahead.

- Staff WILL have to work in beyond less than ideal conditions.
- You will certainly be asked to work different hours, more hours, more shifts, etc
- Leaders and everyone else will be stretched further than we could have imagined.
- **Today we are telling you to stay home if you are sick. That may not always be the case.**
You can look at other countries and see that Nurses, Doctors, Police, EMT's, they have the virus, and there is simply no choice. IF THEY DO NOT WORK, THERE IS NO ONE.

As of today, we are in a good a place. We monitor this by the moment.

- We have zero staff illness.
- Out of 180 employees, two are out of work due to sick children.
- At this time, the Covid Virus is not in any counties we serve. BUT SOON IT WILL BE IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.
- At this time, we have no residents who are ill.

What you must do?

- Keep this out of our cottages.
- DO NOT COME TO WORK SICK
- Wash your hands and wash frequently.

- Do not allow anyone other than PSC employees into the Cottages. THERE CAN BE NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Make sure all who enter for medically necessary reasons are recorded on the entry and exit log.
- Make sure all wash their hands immediately and appropriately.
- Take and record, all who enter, their temperatures, upon entering AND LEAVING
- Social distance yourself when at home and in the community.
- Have each other's back.
- WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY.
- IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE MOST CHARGE PERSON OF ANY ILLNESS OR VIOLATION OF OUR ENTRY POLICY. **LIVES ARE ON THE LINE.**

Folks never forget the power you have to protect, and the power of how you can make other people feel. Love one another. **It's truly the only thing that matters.**

As I shared during our roll out of the safe care pledge, I want to remind you of the words from a musician from Omaha Nebraska. His name is Conor Oberst, and his band is called Bright Eyes.

Bowl Of Oranges

And I came upon a doctor
Who appeared in quite poor health
I said there's nothing that I can do for you, you can't do for yourself
He said oh yes you can, just hold my hand, I think that that would help
So I sat with him awhile
Then I asked him how he felt

He said I think I'm cured

No, in fact, I'm sure of it

Thank you, **stranger**

For your therapeutic smile

So that's how I learned the lesson
That everyone's alone
And your eyes must do some raining
If you're ever gonna grow
And when crying don't help
You can't compose yourself
It's best to compose a poem
An honest verse of longing
Or a simple song of hope

That's why I'm singing baby don't worry

'Cause now I got your back

And every time you feel like crying

I'm gonna try and make you laugh

Folks, please never forget the **power** of the **love** you share, and your **therapeutic smile**.

Thank you for your heroic leadership during these unprecedented times. Now more than ever, families thank you for your support. Thank you for being you and being part of something greater than yourself.

God bless you all.

Dustin Lee

President Prairie Senior Cottages

Concerns thus far from caregiver staff:

- I am single parent, if there is a shelter in place order, and I have to work multiple days and nights straight, what advice do you have for me?
I would start planning and reaching out to everyone in your family and your neighbors for support. Make sure to carry multiple days of clothing when coming to work.
- I am a single person, and I have dog. What advice should I do?
Right now our residents desperately need engagement. If your dog is appropriate, that is they have never been aggressive to humans or pets, and have all their shots up to date, I would work with your cottage director and see if your pet can come to work. Otherwise ask a friend, family, or a neighbor to help with your pet while you are at work.
- What if families demand to enter the cottages? What if they say they have the right to enter the cottage?

This is a national emergency and the President has provided guidance that we must lock down our cottages. This is difficult, and unprecedented times. This is life and death, and it is heartbreaking. We cannot allow anyone to enter and put other lives on the line. Everyone's families are counting on us, they are counting on you.

We are only allowing family visitors if and when a person is actively passing. And then they must be COVID symptom free, we must take their temperature and make sure they wash their hands, record their temperature, coming and going, confine them to the resident's room, and limit to no more than 2 family members.

Unless absolutely medically necessary, and folks are in full protective gear, we are not allowing morticians, vendors, hospice, to enter our cottage.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND HOW SERIOUS THIS IS.

Our duty is to protect those who cannot protect themselves. I would first call your cottage director and if they won't leave, the police.

If you are threatened by someone who is trying to enter our building and you feel your personal safety is at risk, my advice would be to dial 911 first, cooperate if it is your only choice and let the police handle the situation as soon as possible.

- Will we get paid more money?

If there has ever been a time that aides in dementia care facilities deserve more income, it is now. This is why I tell every single Lawmaker, Representative, and Senator who will give me the time, every state agency, and influencer, I tell them, increase our rates, and make it a law, that all those increases go to the direct care staff. I tell all of them, what

heroes you are, and how you deserve meaningful pay and support systems, such as a paid family leave.

I have very very little control over what you get paid. Maybe other larger providers can pay more, but we basically are a slightly more than break-even business. What you get paid, is a reflection of greater society, and the value that society places on caregivers compared to plumbers, electricians, or day care workers, or to all workers.

What caregivers get paid is disgraceful and society should be ashamed that we allow this to happen. Remember, my mom was a single mom, a nurse's aide. I too was a caregiver.

Over 50% of our customers, are what I call taxpayer funded. Yet, they are only 35% of our total revenue. Without more taxpayer dollars, we are limited in what we can pay.

Also, I worry soon we will be looking at reductions in our reimbursement from taxpayers.

I am sorry, you deserve better, you deserve more, and I do all I can with what I have.

- If I contract the virus at work, will our company's \$25,000 life insurance still be valid?
Yes.

Please remember at least these **5 Things**:

1. Do not come to work if you are having symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, shortness of breath, coughing). Our instructions on this may change so pay attention to any messages from us.
2. Don't let ANYONE in our cottages unless medically necessary.
3. Everyone must wash hands frequently.
4. Log all those who enter the building and take their temperature. No one with symptoms are allowed to enter.
5. Lives are on the line. By following these instructions to the letter, we will do our best in preventing the coronavirus from entering our cottages and saving lives.