

Department of Health
THE TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETOWN

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Settled in 1664

Richard DeBenedetto, REHS, CMR
Director

David Henry, MPH
Health Officer

May 21, 2020

To: Mayor Perry
From: Rich DeBenedetto, Director

Re: Care One King James Nursing Home

As discussed, I am concerned about the number of Covid-19 cases in the residents as well as staff at Care One King James. Starting on May 1, 2020, I initially reported to NJDOH that 2 residents of the facility were sent to the hospital for unrelated procedures and were now being tested for Covid-19. Care One King James decided to swab some employees for Covid-19, but at this time there were zero cases at the facility. Today, May 21, 2020, twenty days later, we have a total of 90 residents and 38 staff positive for Covid-19. Their normal daily census is around 100 residents and 154 staff.

I have been in communications with their management every day since the start of this outbreak. All of my questions were answered and all procedures relayed to me were textbook. All along the way I have conferred with NJDOH with concerns of how are cases increasing so rapidly and spiraling out of control with controls employed. At the same time, 2 other facilities were also experiencing outbreaks, but those numbers remained stable, in one (only 7 residents) and only a slow rise in the other (currently 36 residents as of 5/20/20).

On May 8, 2020, I spoke with my regional epidemiologist, Eric Adler at NJDOH about the facility as I received a report of 16 new cases. At that time I felt that there was something wrong. I expressed my concerns and recommended that they may need outside intervention from Dept. of Licensure or the National Guard. Eric said that Care One King James did appear to be reporting correctly and other facilities were getting hit hard at this time as well. We were going to monitor.

On Sunday, May 10, 2020 after reviewing the daily data, I request a call, and Eric and I spoke about the numbers. On Monday, May 11, 2020, I again spoke with Eric and said that the numbers we were seeing alarmed me and outside intervention was necessary, Dept of Licensure and possibly the National Guard. He instructed me to contact the LTC 24 complaint hotline and send him an email noting such. Eric then sent an email up the chain escalating my request for an inspection. I received a call back from my complaint, and they left me a message that I should be

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taking care of this as a local health authority and I should be working with the facility in regards to communicable disease control. Obviously they did not understand my complaint and I called them back. They again reiterated it was a communicable disease issue and not something they would handle. I repeated my request to have an inspection done to check on procedures and PPE. No further contact was made to my office about Dept. of Licensure taking any action.

I continue to work with Care One King James management 24/7. Now, that mandatory testing of all staff and non-Covid + residents are being conducted there, we will see the true extent of the outbreak.