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On the front lines at senior living facilities

By *Sophie Braccini*



A Moraga Royale caregiver gardens with a resident. Photo Sophie Braccini

Caregivers at senior living facilities are on the front lines in the fight for safety in Lamorinda and beyond. Staff is mobilized at these establishments 24/7, applying the utmost precautions to support the most vulnerable population.

At Moraga Royale, Dianne Wilson explains that admission of new residents and tours have been interrupted. She worked with the owner of Berg Communities to establish the procedures for the group's four residences, talking to professionals including her brother-in-law who works for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and gathering as much information as possible.

The first line of defense happens when staff members arrive. They change into fresh clean uniforms, their shoes are disinfected and they scrub their hands thoroughly. Throughout the day everything such as door knobs and elevator buttons are disinfected, including

supplies coming in. The mail, for example, is wiped with disinfectant as it arrives and waits for 24 hours before it is delivered to the residents.

The residents spend a lot more time in their rooms where meals are now served. To avoid disruption of the stable routine for some residents, a few are allowed to eat in the dining hall, one at a time.

Tana Gall, president of the Blue Harbor Senior Living Group that manages Merrill Garden in Lafayette, also said that visits are no longer permitted and residents have to stay in their apartments where the meals are served. Those who decide to go live with family are not allowed to return until the crisis is resolved.

Moraga Royale resident Cliff Dochterman says that he feels fine, though the time spent in his apartment can be lonely. He adds that just like everybody else, the residents have a lot more questions than they have answers, and they follow the directions, which he says seem reasonable.

Activities still happen, but only in small numbers. Wilson explains that the popular bingo, for example, is played several times a day with little groups sitting far apart. One-on-one activities are also encouraged to relieve the anxiety that can manifest with some residents.

Wilson adds that procedures have been established should a resident become ill. What they need most at this time, besides tests, she says, is masks.

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[back](#)

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