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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **COVID-19: Week in Review**

**EAGLE LAKE, Maine (Dec. 18, 2020)** – Efforts to keep Mercy Home residents and Franciscan Home residents as safe as possible during this pandemic, continued this week.

Multi-Level Administrator Denise Raymond, who oversees both residential facilities, informed frontline employees and affiliated staff that swab testing for COVID-19 will now take place every two weeks, instead of every four. That is because Aroostook County's **Positivity Rate** is now considered by Maine CDC as "High." Employees will be tested again on Monday and Tuesday. Raymond was informed on Tuesday that the last round indicated 100% of tested employees received negative results. Additionally, employees who are off during this next round will now have to enter through the main entrance, which is farther from residents, and will have to remain in their vehicles until waived in. The testing is mandatory, even for employees on vacation.

In addition, Raymond is drafting a letter that will provide residents' families information about the vaccine, as well as a consent form. Northern Maine General has partnered with St. John Valley Pharmacy in Fort Kent for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Meanwhile, CEO Michelle Raymond forwarded guidance and information about COVID-19 vaccinations to her Administrative Team, who are to start educating employees about the benefits of vaccinations in creating herd immunity. At this time, vaccination will be voluntary. Information will be provided first to those at Mercy Home, Franciscan Home, and the agency's Waiver Division. Also, NMG HR Specialist Jocelyn Haley updated Return to Work guidelines to reflect new Maine CDC recommendations for its High categorization of the county: For example, "Headache in the last 48 hours" has been added to List of Symptoms used to screen employees and others who are entering NMG facilities.

More information will be provided as it becomes available.

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*Northern Maine General is a nonprofit social services organization serving Aroostook County, with business offices in Eagle Lake and Caribou. Founded in 1907, NMG provides long-term care, rehabilitation, home and community supports, behavioral health services, case management, and consultation services and resources. Contracted services include subsidized apartments.*

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***Our mission is to provide individuals with the highest standard of care and help all of the people we serve enjoy life to the fullest potential.***

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