

# Plaid House remains free of COVID during pandemic

Through mandated mask-wearing, strict safety measures in both Plaid House residences, and staff and resident vaccinations by health professionals from Walgreen's corporate offices, Plaid House has managed remarkably to keep all residents free of COVID infection.

This is a considerable achievement since all but two residents chose to attend high school in person and not participate in remote learning.

According to Neville Newton, executive director of Plaid House, two staff members fell ill, but because staff were vaccinated and Plaid House maintained strict mask rules and health protocols, these cases did not leapfrog to the resident population. Without these measures, COVID could have ripped through Plaid House and Thenen House.

Throughout the pandemic and even today, to enter Plaid House residences

all visitors have to mask up, have their temperatures taken, and apply hand sanitizer. Home visits were curtailed for most of the pandemic, and families had to meet with residents at Plaid House in the open air, weather permitting.

Now that residents are vaccinated, home visits have resumed, but Plaid House staff is always mindful to maintain strict health practices, Newton emphasized.

He said he is very grateful to Walgreens, which contacted Plaid House last January and offered free vaccinations for residents and staff as outreach to longterm care facilities. "We were lucky to be on that list," said Newton.

Walgreens came to Plaid House three different times to deliver first and second doses of the vaccine.

Throughout the pandemic, safety of residents was of utmost importance always. "I felt very comfortable with the measures we took," said Newton. "We had very good health protocols in place since the beginning. Residents have their own rooms, and that was fortunate."

Along with forbidding home visits, Plaid House curtailed all restaurant dining and local entertainment. However, once infection rates declined Plaid House relaxed its rules somewhat. On weekends residents could go to the movies with staff, except they had to stay masked, and snacks were not permitted.

Because there is a strong need for the



**VACCINATION OF RESIDENTS** allowed regular services and home visits to resume.

residents to have outside recreation, Newton noted, trips have continued but with great care. Most were outdoors, including visits to the beach and local farm markets.

"Some programs never took their residents out," Newton reported, "but we felt strongly that we had to. But we were always mindful about the places we went. We told the staff if you get someplace, and you feel uncomfortable, just leave."

Newton reported that COVID in the first few months derailed many important Plaid House therapeutic activities and kept new residents from being admitted. But with vaccinations, life returned to a more normal pace at Plaid House, he stated, and admissions soared back up.

He said there had been "feelings of isolation" among residents during the long winter and spring days of the pandemic but said these have dissipated.

To further insure there are no infections, Newton is aiming for 100 percent staff vaccination rates. About 80 percent of them are inoculated, he reported.



**COVID SECURITY** is tight at all times at entrance to Plaid House.