



For Immediate Release:
October 12, 2020



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LeadingAge Ohio stands behind Brethren Care Village, other quality providers amid COVID-19 outbreaks

ASHLAND, Ohio – As the voice for mission-driven, values-based providers of long-term services and supports in Ohio, LeadingAge Ohio continues to stand by and support members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Brethren Care Village in Ashland, Ohio. Brethren Care Village is recognized as a statewide leader in senior care with a 48-year history of serving older adults in Ashland County.

Brethren Care Village has been especially hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and has experienced a surge of cases of COVID-19 among its residents and staff. Brethren Care operates an extremely high-quality nursing facility with an “above average” rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), with particularly high marks for quality measures.

“We are deeply saddened by the outbreak at the Health Care Center (Nursing Home) and openly ask everyone to pray for our residents, staff and medical personnel; all of which are a blessing and a family to us at the village.” stated Brethren Care Village President and CEO Troy Snyder.

In response to the recent outbreak, Brethren Care Village has been working with the local Health Department, emergency management, and our UH hospital team. At the same time the organization has invested in mitigating systems to the HVAC systems and are cleaning/disinfecting daily throughout the organization.

“Our staff have been working tirelessly to care and serve the residents (our residents); and we won’t quit and will continue to do so,” added Snyder. At this time, there are 5 residents which were transferred to the ICU at UH Samaritan and there have been 4 deaths associated with the outbreak. Several staff and residents continue to be in both isolation and quarantine status as monitored by the Ashland County Health Department. “It is always with great sadness when we lose community members.” shared Ashland County’s Health Commissioner, Heather Reffett. “The health department has worked closely with Brethren Care to identify the cause of the outbreak and to limit the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to cause extreme burden to both the public health and health care system. Our on-going efforts can only be effective when our county residents support our work. Please do take this virus seriously, stay in doors if you are sick, wear a facial covering when out and ensure to protect your loved ones who are most vulnerable.”

This situation has been repeated around the state in recent months within long-term services and supports, all of whom are adapting to the daily challenges of caring for a vulnerable population and keeping a deadly infection at bay. Local health departments, including the Ashland County Health Department, have a role in communicating with the state when outbreaks occur and play a key role in conducting epidemiological investigations, as well as providing emergency response support. Currently, the State, the region and local partners are working to address this outbreak.

“What Brethren Care Village experienced recently continues to prove that no facility is immune to a potential outbreak, even when they are taking all of the precautions a nursing home is trained to take,” stated Kathryn Brod, president and CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. “Ohio providers must receive enhanced supports to continue to provide care and recover from outbreaks. This is not a one-and-done issue; those who serve vulnerable older adults will likely continue to be on the frontlines of this fight for a year or more.”

As has been widely reported, older adults, especially those with chronic or multiple conditions, are the most vulnerable segment of the population for complications from a COVID-19 infection. Almost all residents of a long-term care facility fit into this population, and many are there because care needs exceed what can be provided safely at home.

“We want to help families understand that senior care providers are highly trained on infection control procedures, and will continue to provide the best environment for an individual with serious conditions requiring around-the-clock care,” continued Brod. “We must join together to support these heroes and encourage state and federal leaders to continue to increase supports within the sector.”

LeadingAge Ohio will continue to provide support and guidance for all members during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for those who have experienced positive cases. This has included access to infection control experts, daily briefings, and a wide array of educational and technical supports for member staff and leadership.

As a member of Ashland County family, the occurrences at Brethren Care Village do contribute to the overall county numbers. At this time, the Ashland County Health Department is awaiting signed death certificates with the cause of death listed prior to announcing an increase its COVID-19 deaths.

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Founded in 1937, LeadingAge Ohio is a nonprofit organization that represents over 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services, in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 elderly Ohioans daily and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.