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A Statement from Curt Stutzman, President & CEO of Messiah Lifeways on COVID-19 Outbreak

Despite our tireless efforts to prevent the virus from entering our community over the past eight months, we are currently battling an outbreak of COVID-19 in Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village's Nursing Care neighborhoods. The residents who have tested positive have been moved to designated COVID-19 care units where our dedicated team of specially trained professionals are caring for them and any others who may be affected in the future. Due to HIPAA privacy regulations and out of respect for the residents' families, we are not disclosing any additional personal information about the positive individuals at this time.

Unfortunately, the recent increase in coronavirus cases throughout the state is being reflected in our community as well, and over the past two weeks we have experienced just how contagious and devastating this virus truly is. Messiah Lifeways was fortunate to have not been impacted by COVID-19 cases in our health care building in the past, but has taken swift action to contain the current spread. Our mission calls us to be responsible in how we care for older adults. We will continue to do everything in our power to limit exposure and prevent further spread, while continuing to fight this terrible virus on behalf of those we serve -- I have full confidence in our team members to diligently carry this out.

We are working with public health officials and are following procedures recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to prevent the virus from spreading. We are also partnering with professionals from Penn State [Project ECHO](#) (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) and UPMC for support and guidance as well.

Messiah Lifeways is regularly testing all residents and staff to quickly identify and isolate new and asymptomatic cases, and has been doing so as directed by the Department of Health and CMS since October. Additional registered nurses who have previous outbreak experience have been acquired with the assistance of Penn State Project ECHO, and a specialized cleaning company has been engaged to disinfect the Nursing neighborhoods and common spaces throughout the Village Center building on a regular basis. Our PPE reserves are well stocked as well.

Messiah Lifeways has been proactive in its approach from the beginning, putting processes in place to protect residents and team members. Procedures related to COVID-19 began to be implemented at Messiah Village as early as March 5, which included reducing entryways and re-training staff on infection control standards. In spite of recent setbacks, the health and safety of our residents and team members continues to be our top priority. For more information and latest updates, please visit MessiahLifeway.org/blog/coronavirus.

About Messiah Lifeways®: *Founded in 1896, Messiah Lifeways is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving older adults throughout South Central Pennsylvania. Messiah Lifeways offers resident communities, nursing care, life coaching, enrichment opportunities, and community support services to support as many people as possible through the journey of aging. For more information, visit MessiahLifeways.org.*

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