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For Immediate Release

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Columbia Housing Seeks to Protect Residents at Senior High-Rises and Other Units as COVID-19 Numbers Rise

Columbia, SC...Senior citizens living in housing developments across the nation are paying close attention to COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. That's because many seniors rent apartments in developments with others their own age — ordinarily an advantage because it encourages social interaction. Now, that concentration could put them at higher risk: A World Health Organization study found that those 65 and older are six times more susceptible to infection by the novel coronavirus than people 15 to 44 years old.

Over the past 30-days, Columbia Housing implemented its LEVEL 1 and LEVEL 2 Protocols in its high-rises that that: 1) Encouraged senior citizens to shelter-in-place and only go out when absolutely necessary; 2) Closed all Community Rooms to encourage social distancing, 3) Instituted deep cleaning schedule for all common areas and frequently touched surfaces using Nisus DSV, found by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to be an effective disinfectant against SARS-CoV, the cause of COVID-19. Nisus DSV is a broad-spectrum disinfectant, sanitizer and virucide labeled to kill many viruses and bacteria. 3) Limited the public's interaction with residents via lobby areas.

Interim Executive Director Ivory Mathews wants to make sure her staff and the residents are ready should an employee or resident at one of its properties suspects they've been exposed to COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

"Many of our properties feature contiguous living where residents live near one another. While this is a great way to create a sense of community, it requires extra safeguards when you talk about a highly contagious virus," says Mathews. "In the case of our high-rises—most of those residents are older or disabled. These LEVEL 3 Protocols will help everyone know what to do if someone thinks they've been exposed", concludes Mathews.

For a detailed look at Columbia Housing's LEVEL 3 Protocols to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 novel coronavirus spread, [click here](#).

Columbia Housing currently provides affordable housing to 1,600+ families in its Public Housing Program and 4,000+ families in its Housing Choice Voucher Program.

ALL STAFF

Level 3: SYMPTOMATIC CASE AT PROPERTY

Triggering Event: Staff, resident, or essential to life caregiver 1) self-reports symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, or dry cough) OR 2) has been in contact with someone with a medically confirmed COVID-19 Positive diagnosis within the last 14 days.

OPERATIONS	RESIDENTS	VISITORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Immediately ask the symptomatic person to self-quarantine and inform them you will interview them shortly over the phone (if it is a staff member, they should go home, resident should go to his/her unit, and other residents should self-isolate). ❑ Contact the sick person via phone and ask the following Trace Interview Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Have you interacted with any other resident or staff member in the building since presenting symptoms? 2) Have you used any common areas in the building in the last 72 hours? 3) Do you plan to seek care from a healthcare professional for COVID-19 testing? If so, would you be able to notify me of the test results as soon as possible? ❑ Activate your Critical Response Team for further instructions by emailing imathews@columbiahousing.org, ybean@columbiahousing.org, and your property manager. ❑ Close office to all and sanitize all high-touch areas immediately. Deep clean all common areas where the symptomatic person reported being present during the last 72 hours. ❑ Property remains at Level 3 until AFTER the 14-day self-quarantine or symptomatic person provides documentation from medical professional with a COVID-19 negative result and/or diagnosis from a medical professional confirming symptoms were caused by another illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Instruct any residents that are nearby to leave all common and lobby areas, return to their units, and to immediately wash their hands for 20 seconds. ❑ If a sick resident is self-quarantined in their unit, work with property management team to encourage them to make contact with a health care professional for next steps. Not all symptomatic people are brought it for testing. Therefore, self-quarantine is the best practice when dealing with a possible case. ❑ Work with property management team and staff to do wellness checks via phone. ❑ Property management and staff should check on sick resident via phone daily to monitor condition and/or a drastic decline in health. ❑ Make sure resident is receiving Social Isolation Prevention via daily calls to prevent resident social isolation. The resident should be encouraged to emerge from self-quarantined after 14 days of being symptom free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ No visitors of any kind (outside of personnel giving life-essential care): No visitors are allowed in the building. Only life-necessary caregivers are allowed on the premises after passing the Wellness Screening Tool for Housing with Level 3 Emergency Contact Info located in the Resource List. ❑ Essential Life Care Personnel who answer “Yes” on any questions on the Wellness Screening Tool should be asked to refrain from visiting for 14 days as a safety precaution for residents and staff. ❑ Lobby and common areas should be avoided until after they are cleaned thoroughly. ❑ REMEMBER: These protocols are in place to contain a potential outbreak. Please make sure anyone that presents symptoms at the property is taken seriously to stop the potentially deadly spread of COVID-19.

Triggering Event: Resident or Staff have a medically confirmed COVID+ test result.

ALL STAFF

OPERATIONS	RESIDENTS	VISITORS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IMMEDIATELY SELF-QUARANTINE ALL RESIDENTS Ask residents in all hallways and common areas should be asked to report to their units immediately due to an emergency. Advise them to not visit other’s units until further notice and more information will be shared soon. Additional staff at the property should shelter in place if they were not directly exposed to the COVID-19+ person. 2. IMMEDIATELY SELF-QUARANTINE COVID-19+ RESIDENT OR STAFF Staff person should be instructed to go home and resident should be instructed to go to their unit for self-quarantine and further instruction. 3. CONTACT YOUR STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT All COVID+ positive results are reported to the State Health Department. They will most likely know your staff/resident is positive. Once on the phone, explain you have a COVID+ resident/staff, and you manage a senior living complex where other residents potentially have been exposed. Given the high risk population we serve, they will provide further instruction regarding quarantine protocols and further support. 4. CONTACT YOUR CRITICAL RESPONSE TEAM IMMEDIATELY AFTER SPEAKING TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT Email: imathews@columbiahousing.org, ybean@columbiahousing.org, 	<p>AFTER INITIAL CRISIS RECOVERY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Work with Property management team and staff to do wellness checks via phone during the phone. ☐ Property management team and staff should check on sick resident via phone daily to monitor condition and notify emergency personnel if there is a drastic decline in health. ☐ Make sure residents are receiving Social Isolation Prevention via daily calls to prevent resident social isolation during potential quarantine. Quarantine time and protocol will most likely be at the direction of your State’s Public Health Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ No visitors or outside persons are allowed during self-quarantine. ☐ Await the instruction of your State Health Department and/or your Critical Response Team.