



Montgomery Place

FROM 
Deborah E. Hart, CEO and President

DATE May 19, 2020

SUBJ MONTGOMERY PLACE EXPERIENCES RIPPLE EFFECT OF
THE VIRUS' SPREAD DURING THIS TIME OF COVID-19

Dear Friends and Family:

This evening, I was reading to find some news on the COVID-19 front that could shed a different light on topics I typically discuss. One affecting all of us could begin hitting home more significantly if things don't change.

Several weeks ago, journalists reported on meatpacking houses being shut down due to COVID-19. During the last few weeks, there hasn't been too much coverage by mainstream media in Chicago, but it certainly remains a hot topic in areas with meatpacking plants.

These sites seem to host the perfect trifecta for the virus to thrive: close quarters, labored breathing and cold air.

- Workers are in close quarters not only on the production lines. They also rely on public transportation or share rides. Often immigrant workers typically share their home with many extended family members. So the virus has more opportunity to spread.
- Labored breathing, which can result from heavy lifting required of many workers, might affect how they adhere to face mask practices. Anyone who wears a mask while doing any heavy work knows how uncomfortable and hard it is to breathe.
- Cold air is the third factor promoting COVID-19 in meatpacking plants. This virus seems to thrive better in cold than in heat.

Statistics also tell the story. According to Johns Hopkins, communities with meatpacking plants report a COVID-19 infection rate per thousand people is nearly 5,000 among close to 77,000 workers in the U.S. Compare that ratio with Chicago which has 962 cases of the virus per 100,000 people.

This high rate of infection has caused major producers to close down their plants due to the continued infection hazards for employees. Sanitation is not an issue because slaughterhouses are disinfected continually under USDA guidelines.

What until now has been somewhat of an indirect impact to us at home and at Montgomery Place could become a bigger issue. As we purchase meat products for

meals at Montgomery Place, we find sourcing fresh meat at a reasonable price is now much harder. By relying on frozen products, we are likely to see a decline in quality. For example, an option on today's dinner menu changed because the meat we received has freezer burn. If this virus continues for too much longer, we may need to change our diet and menu options.

We'll continue to do our best to offer daily meals with quality meat. As purchase options change, we may need to adjust our menu options and keep you informed. This is just another way that COVID-19 impacts lives.

Don't hesitate to reach out if I can answer any questions or be of further assistance. Call my mobile phone number, 773-617-1317, at any time.

Understanding why things change, helps us seek solutions.