

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #61: FRIDAY 28 AUGUST 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 2: 36(L5)+30(L4)+78(L3)+11(L2)=DAY 155

C **VID-19**

NEED TO KNOW

COVID-19: We just don't know, do we?

All over the world, those in authority, in a country or city or community, are being called upon to make predictions about this Coronavirus; is it being defeated, will it come back, how and when do we ease back on restrictions and precautions, how do citizens of the world respond? The evidence is increasingly clear: we just don't know.

Every day, scientists are making progress in research analysis and finding a cure---and then politicians and the media create their own versions of what we mere earthlings need to know and do. Our needs are simple: when and how will it end! Based on that information we will then know how to proceed with our locked-down and restricted lives, in a personal and joint effort to survive the war, and get back to living a normal life, whatever 'normal' is going to look and feel like.

Against this backdrop, our CEO and his Managers met this week to review the pressing issues around privately employed or contracted housekeeping and gardening services (individuals or organizations), hairdressers, physiotherapists, mani/pedicurists and similar professions and services being allowed back into the Villages, and the re-opening the Village halls. The debate was vigorous, and what emerged was general consensus there is simply too much at risk to take anything other than the current cautious approach. We can't rush this. Many countries are witnessing a new surge in infections, and the possibility of new surges in South Africa is real. This is why, for example, MHA continues to provide a private taxi shuttle service for our Frail Care employees, and why deep cleaning of the Frail Care units continues; these two services cost R130,000 per month, but will continue for as long as is needed. How long will that be? We just don't know, do we?

Some residents will be up in arms that the service providers listed above will still be not allowed into our Villages, or that the Halls aren't being re-opened yet. According to the Managers, the significant majority will welcome the decision, as it will extend their protection against the virus. There are those residents who are already ignoring the decisions (which, as mentioned in last Friday's Newsflash, are State laws, not simply MHA's rules). Maybe they have knowledge which MHA doesn't have, but the sad truth of it, to use an old English phrase, is: "On your own head be it" (which, according to one source, is roughly translated as: "I think this is a really terrible idea but you're the one who will suffer the consequences so do what you like."). The CEO, accompanied by the Manager concerned, will be confronting those who have decided to ignore laws and rules, or who are selfishly bending them to suit themselves. It is sad that this needs to be done, but MHA will continue to be a leader in Covid-19 risk management, to protect lives. Doing anything less would be a betrayal.

Where do we go from here?

- The CEO is drafting a letter, to be delivered to every resident during the course of next week, in which he will deal with the contractual and practical issues regarding the broad subject of 'housekeeping and gardening', and on how we can best deal with these,

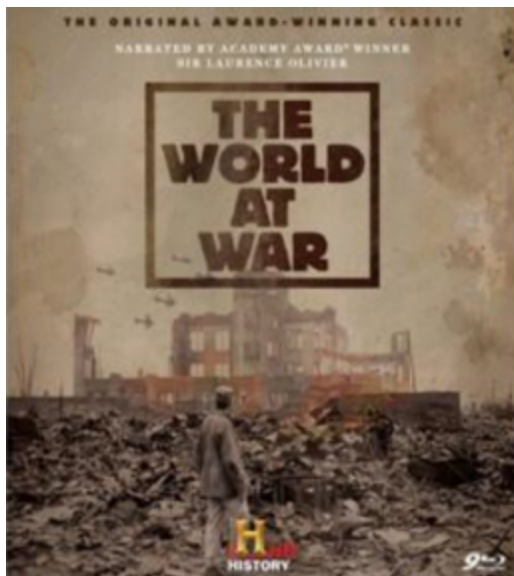
starting with re-introduction for all of the urgent reasons aired over recent times, and into the future. As we have said before, a complex range of issues is involved here

- The CEO and his Managers, supported by CovidCom, will continue to review the issues around housekeeping, gardening and other services, and the re-opening of the Village halls. This review will happen on a weekly basis, and will form part of an overall risk assessment, based on what is happening Covid-wise within and beyond MHA. A further announcement will be made during September, in this regard.

The Board, CovidCom, the CEO and his Managers once again call on all residents, and the wider MHA family, for their support and understanding, as decisions are considered and made in the best interests of everyone. We have come so far together. Has it been enough? Can we all do more, until victory is achieved? We just don't know, do we?

This puts our current dilemma and challenges into some perspective: Blind and partially sighted people are especially vulnerable to the Corona virus, as they rely on touch to read braille and to navigate unfamiliar surroundings. They also need people to assist and guide them, so social distancing is not easy. Most of us have so much to be grateful for.

What the world needs now



Many members of the MHA family will remember "The World at War", a 26-episode British TV documentary series which chronicled the events of WWII. It was, at the time of its completion in 1973, the most expensive factual series ever made, and attracted widespread acclaim.

Since then, TV has brought virtually every form of conflict onto our screens; wars amongst nations, tribal wars, personal wars, gang warfare, religious wars, drug wars, terrorism, genocide and cyber wars. Recently there has been a renewed and necessary focus on tragedies around race, femicide and other abuse. The major world powers still talk about the possibility of WWIII breaking out at some future time. Meanwhile, many nations continue to spend obscene amounts on 'defence'; last year USA spent US\$643 billion, NATO partners \$264bn, China \$168bn, Saudi Arabia \$83bn, and South Africa spent \$3.6bn. Why? What for?! The world is in a terrible mess.

In 1949, after the use of nuclear weapons at the end of WWII, physicist Albert Einstein suggested that any outcome of a possible WWIII would be so dire as to revert mankind back to the Stone Age. When asked what types of weapons World War III might be fought with, Einstein warned, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones".

Apart from the relentless wars against racism and abuse, the world is now fighting a different type of global war; the war against Covid-19. Almost a year down the road there is still difficulty in reaching agreement on Covid's cause, how to handle it, how to defeat it, and how to prevent its return. Everything has a political 'spin'; fighting for position, fighting for a slice of the pie, and how to influence voters with the loudest voice (the veracity of what is being said seems inconsequential!).

Lockdown across the globe presented a glimmer of hope of a recalibration of how humankind could change the way we treat each other, and how we treat Mother Earth. That opportunity seems to be slipping away, day by day.

Is a simple solution staring us in the face? "What the World Needs Now Is Love" was a popular 1965 soft ballad with lyrics by Hal David and music composed by Burt Bacharach. The first verse goes like this:

*What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
No not just for some but for everyone.*

Call it corny; call it naïve; call it schmaltzy; call it what you like but, 55 years down the road, the message in the song remains strong and clear. Human beings have long forgotten how to love one another, and how to live in harmony with ourselves and with nature. We seem to have forgotten the commandment that we should love our neighbours as we love ourselves. We rush to justify conflict, hurt and hatred, basing arguments and actions on race, religion, gender, territory, history, revenge, prejudice; on just about anything and everything. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all teach the importance of loving God and loving your neighbour, because all three religions have a very large common core. Where are the leaders, across the world, who preach and practice love? It cannot just be left to religious leaders. The world desperately needs a new generation of leaders who have the hearts and minds of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King Jnr, the Dalai Lama, Benazir Bhutto, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, Albert Luthuli and so many others.

This is what 1 Corinthians 13 4-7 tells us about love: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres".

Oh yes; what the world needs now is love, sweet love.

'We may give without loving, but we cannot love without giving' Bernard Meltzer (American radio personality)

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #60: FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 2: 36(L5)+30(L4)+78(L3)+4(L2)=DAY 148



The virus: taking stock of where we are today

As the MHA family, and as a tiny fraction of the 7.8 billion people on Earth, we are five months' down the road in dealing with this virus; dealing with Lockdown, uncertainty, sacrifice, inconvenience, loneliness, instances of being infected or infectious, information and misinformation, and just about everything else imaginable being thrown at us to disrupt our lives. If this was the theme of a hit TV series, we would throw naartjies at the screen; wouldn't sleep at night!

We are witnessing how the infection rate is declining in some countries (currently South Africa falls into this coveted category), or suddenly and randomly increasing again (parts of the USA, Australia, New Zealand, France, and now Germany).

This has been stated before by scientists (and by CovidCom!): COVID-19 is an unpredictable beast. We will leave it to you to pore over the global statistics, but don't spend too much time on that; by tomorrow the pattern and the numbers will have changed.

What should occupy our minds today is this fact: across MHA we have no residents or staff presenting any Covid-like symptoms, no one is in isolation at home or in a MHA facility, and no one is on our 'de-isolated' list. Our Nursing Services Manager summed up the situation nicely: "All is good at the moment"! This is the moment to take a deep breath, but it is certainly premature to unwind the wire thingy from around the neck of the champagne bottle, or to drop our guard. The Covid monster will continue to prowl the streets of our city, and around all of MHA's facilities. You all know what to do in this regard. Please do not become complacent or careless; we have come too far to let it slide. To borrow from a WWII slogan: "Careless behaviour costs lives"

It is also a time to reflect on how we have arrived at this point. CovidCom's view is that the following have all contributed: preparation, taking the virus seriously, the right medical/nursing decisions, an unbelievably high level of professionalism and dedication on the part of the nursing and caring staff, exceptional levels of compliance and co-operation on the part of residents, and all of us having to make hard decisions. Let us also acknowledge that we are at this point by the grace of God. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast." What else needs to be said right now?

Keeping in touch with loved ones

Everyone, to some or other extent, has been cruelly deprived of contact with loved ones during Lockdown. It has been a necessary yet painful sacrifice. Those residents who have been locked in (Frail Cares, Bedsitters and Epworth Close) have been particularly hard hit, even if some visits at the gates and fences have been possible. It has been sad to witness, but those affected have been accepting and courageous.

CovidCom has decided that it is now safe enough to create an indoor visiting area at CP Bradfield Frail Care, so that a resident of CPB or Bedsitters can be visited by a loved one. Matron Sanet Marx has asked that the following be shared:

- The area is at the front door; visitors don't move through the buildings at all
- A Perspex dividing screen has been placed on a table. There is seating for two visitors
- Folk wishing to visit should make an appointment with the Matron (061 4755530)
- Visitors are screened before entering the building, and they are encouraged to wear a mask at all times
- The area is sanitized before every visit, and sanitizing liquid will be available for use by visitors
- Unfortunately no hugging or touching can be allowed

Plans are underway to install similar facilities at Maranatha Frail Care and Epworth Close. 2
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In addition, there is a roving mobile phone available at CP Bradfield, and is used often (mostly by the same people who phone regularly). This enables a resident to speak to family or a friend, using the phone or via WhatsApp video. Matron Marx thinks that it is underutilised. Please feel free to make contact via this mobile phone; the number is 063 875 1321

Taking it to another Level altogether!!!

This Tuesday just past heralded the move to Lockdown Level 2. So it has been necessary to update our Lockdown Log, as per the top (the masthead) of the Newsflash. Apart from providing a weekly reminder of a statistic we would rather forget, it provides us all with a bit of arithmetic practice (as if we don't already have enough numbers to deal with in our daily lives; ID, PIN, our own and other important mobile phones and landlines, bank account, TV channels, passwords and the like!).

Non-residents entering MHA's Villages

Often with limited time available to ponder, CovidCom has tried its best to share information with residents as quickly as possible. Inevitably there have been instances where more clarity should have been given, or where we got it wrong. We have also made some decisions best suited to the needs of residents but not fully compliant with the Lockdown laws.

Regarding the laws and rules around Visitors being allowed back into MHA Villages, CovidCom shares the following:

1. As stated in Newsflash #59 on Monday 17 August 2020, our Village gates are again open to visitors (family or friends)
2. In the same Newsflash we drew your attention to Para 58 of the Government Gazette which gave legal affect to the Lockdown Level 2 changes, and which stated: "All visits by members of the public to older persons' residential facilities are prohibited except to the extent and in the manner directed by the relevant Cabinet Minister". It is currently still the view of the Department of Social Development that visitors are not allowed into facilities such as MHA's Villages. Unless or until MHA is instructed otherwise, the decision per 1. above remains: visitors are allowed into MHA Villages
3. The issue of privately employed or contracted housekeeping and gardening services (individuals or organizations) was also mentioned in Newsflash #59, and that contractual, legal and other issues are involved. This is a complex matter, as is the need to allow

hairdressers, physiotherapists, mani/pedicurists and similar professions and services back into the Villages. These issues, as well as re-opening of the Halls, is currently being reviewed by the CEO, in collaboration with internal and external parties, and will also be discussed at a meeting between the CEO and his Managers on Tuesday 25 August. The outcome of these important matters will be advised to residents as soon as possible. In the interim, please accept that CovidCom and the CEO cannot make hasty and/or incorrect decisions which could impact on the health and safety of all residents and staff.

Unrelated to the above, but in answer to queries received since Level 2 was implemented:

- residents are again allowed freedom of movement within South Africa, for whatever reasons
- those residents who have been away from their cottage during Lockdown are free to return
- at this stage, there is no requirement for residents to be subjected to any form of isolating, on their return

Food for thought

- Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet (Aristotle)
- Gratitude turns what we have into enough (author unknown)
- “In the depth of winter I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer”

(Albert Camus: French philosopher, author and journalist)

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #59: MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+78(L3)=DAY 144



IMPORTANT CHANGES, IN LINE WITH LOCKDOWN LEVEL 2:

President Ramaphosa announced some important Lockdown changes on Saturday night, moving the country to Level 2 and, with it, some critically important opening up of economic sectors and sources of employment. Much of what was announced had been anticipated by CovidCom, and plans were already underway to make some necessary and no doubt welcome changes to the lives of MHA residents, in particular in our ‘independent living’ Villages. Our Managers have been involved in the decision-making process, and in some instances Liaison Committee members have been consulted.

CovidCom understands and accepts that some of the decisions made since our Lockdown began in late March were not popular, but it was necessary to make decisions which protected the lives of residents and staff, and the valuable impact of those decisions has been proven. We anticipate that some of the decisions which we are now announcing and

implementing will not be universally accepted, or be enough, but the best interests of all of our residents and staff are paramount. Likewise, some of the decisions we are making to delay changes may attract criticism. We will adjust and adapt where and how we need to, and CovidCom would welcome comments and suggestions via covid.concern@methomes.co.za or via the Managers.

The following changes will apply from Tuesday 18 August 2020:

GENERAL

1. These changes apply only to our 'independent living' Villages, and not to Bob Zeiss Bedsitters, Epworth Close, or our two Frail Care facilities. Those have specific needs and requirements, and will be addressed separately, as a matter of urgency
2. CovidCom has studied the Government Gazette which gives legal affect to the Lockdown Level 2 changes. It is interesting that a paragraph reads "All visits by members of the public to--older persons' residential facilities--are prohibited except to the extent and in the manner directed by the relevant Cabinet Minister". Clarity is being sought from the Department of Social Development in this regard. What is contained in this Newsflash is based on best information at hand, but some facets may have to change
3. Under Level 2, residents are again allowed freedom of movement within South Africa (you can now go to the beach, to your gym, or on that postponed getaway!!), and those residents who have been away from their cottage during Lockdown are free to return
4. It is critical to remember that Government has the authority to change Level 2 practices if the need arises; for example, if there is a resurgence of infections locally and/or nationally. In the same way, MHA may find it necessary to subsequently adjust some of our own rules and regulations. We all have a critically important role to play in avoiding this; we all need to continue abiding by laws and rules, in these extraordinary times

VISITORS

1. Our Village gates are again open to visitors (family or friends)
2. The President referred to visitors being allowed in 'small groups', and the new Gazette refers to "10 or less in a residence". CovidCom requests residents to be mindful of safe distancing at all times
3. Visitors are required to wear masks (this remains mandatory, and is the law of the land)
4. Visitors must respect the privacy of others, must confine themselves to the cottage being visited, and this must apply to children visiting as well. It is up to Village residents to ensure compliance
5. Visitors are subject to Government's 22h00-04h00 curfew. No overnight stays in MHA cottages are allowed unless sanctioned by the Manager in advance
6. It is the responsibility of MHA residents to ensure that any outsider visiting them in their cottage is healthy (not showing any Covid-like signs or symptoms), and that sanitizing of hands is carried out on arrival

OTHER RELATED MATTERS

1. CovidCom and the CEO are urgently addressing the issues around privately employed or contracted housekeeping and gardening services (individuals or organizations), as well as the provision of some form of interim housekeeping services arranged by MHA. Contractual, legal and other issues are involved. These service providers are still not allowed in our Villages, but a decision regarding this will be made, and announced, before the end of August. Residents have been most tolerant in this regard, for which we are grateful

2. The Village halls will remain shut, other than to access the library or hairdressing salon (where applicable), but a decision regarding re-opening will be made before the end of August

No one in the MHA family can afford to let his/her guard down, and to fall into the trap of believing that the Lockdown Level 2 laws and rules mean that we're near the end of the war, and we can become complacent. The opposite applies; we're still in the middle of the pandemic, and a resurgence is going to happen; it's just a matter of time and place. The relaxations are to try to save the economy.

Please let us all work together to get through this pandemic, to survive Lockdown, and to remain healthy. Many residents may need counselling; in this regard please speak to your Manager, so that appropriate counselling can be made available, if required.

The Board, CovidCom and the Management team thank all residents and staff for their continued support.

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+75(L3)=DAY 141



This Coronavirus has a mind of its own

Just when we start believing what politicians, scientists and the media across the world tell us about Covid-19, this vicious virus throws yet another challenge our way, rather like a killer tornado which suddenly changes its path, its velocity, and its swathe of destruction. In South Africa we are also forced to endure farcical side-shows; ongoing under-reporting of cases, changing of minds and direction, corruption and nepotism around supplying healthcare workers with PPEs, and the ban of alcohol and tobacco sales (it is estimated that the alcohol ban is costing this country R200 million per day in lost taxes; enough to pay 1000 teachers' salaries for an entire year).

Some MHA residents still don't take the Covid-19 threat seriously enough, or at all. They continue to defy our Government by inviting outside visitors and family into their cottages, and visit folk outside of their village. CovidCom and the Managers have asked/reminded/pleaded with residents to comply. A few selfish residents have chosen to break the laws of the land and the MHA rules set in place, all imposed with the sole purpose of limiting the inevitable spread of the virus. Some fearful residents have approached CovidCom with a request to adopt a 'name and shame' approach to deal with the offenders, but we will not do that. Every single one of our residents and staff has had to make painful sacrifices since Lockdown began in March; some have not even been able to bid a last farewell to loved ones, or to gather together for strength, comfort and support. Many are suffering the psychological and emotional effects of all of this.

To again emphasize just how unpredictable and destructive Covid-19 is, please consider the following:

- Earlier in the week Australia suffered its deadliest day of the pandemic so far, with 21 deaths in the state of Victoria. The deaths were all among people over 70, with 16 linked to aged care facilities
- Australia's rate of death in residential aged care is the second highest in the world, behind Canada
- Victoria is again under a level of lockdown; in Melbourne, people who are not essential workers may leave their houses only to grocery shop (one person per household per day) or exercise for an hour, and there is a curfew in place from 8pm to 5am
- In New Zealand, after going more than 100 days without a new case, four people in Auckland tested positive on Tuesday. In response, their Prime Minister reintroduced level 3 restrictions in Auckland
- Worldwide there have been over 21 million cases of Covid-19, with 756,000 deaths. As of today the figures in South Africa are 573,000 cases, and 11,270 deaths. The numbers are rising, and some projections are frightening.

Within the next few days much of what has been shared in today's Newsflash may become academic; if Government moves the country to Lockdown Level 2, the ban on visiting, on alcohol and on tobacco might be lifted, saving a broad range of industries and businesses, and the livelihoods of millions of our fellow citizens. CovidCom, in conjunction with the Managers, is weighing up the options regarding allowing visitors and private employees into the Villages, and plotting the safest way forward, within or even outside of Lockdown laws. The voice of residents will also be heard.

Let us close off with these words:

- All of CovidCom's decisions made thus far, and still to be made until the pandemic has passed, have had one central goal: how best can MHA protect its people; 570 residents, all of whom are Covid-19's easy targets because of age and health vulnerabilities, and the 112 staff members
- The MHA Board, CovidCom and Management have asked this question to residents before, and we now risk asking it yet again: In your everyday behaviour, and in your chosen community, do you want to be a part of the solution or a part of the problem?
- Words from American author and speaker Byron Katie resonate well, in the current climate:

"We don't mature through age; we mature in awareness".

Our awareness of others, of the threats which this Covid enemy poses, and of how we can work together in a mature manner to defeat it, are what will get us through this nightmare. By the grace of God, thus far we have not lost one person to Covid-19. There is no magical "Head Office", no latter-day Florence Nightingale or Mother Teresa to ensure that it remains like this: it is largely in the hands of the MHA family; it is actually largely in your hands.

Make sure you test positive for Faith. Keep distance from Doubt, and isolate from Fear. Trust God through it all.

Plagues: Learning from history

FOREWARD:

Bubonic Plague (Black Death) is caused by a bacterium and transmitted to human beings by bites from infected fleas that live on rats. Its more feared form is Pneumonic Plague, which is characterised by respiratory transmission of the bacteria between human beings. The

Plague has devastated human societies since the Byzantine Empire (541-542). It devastated Europe in a second pandemic (1346-1353) and is estimated to have caused the death of 25% of the population. The disease did not disappear after these pandemics but continued for centuries in more localised but still fatal epidemics. A third pandemic started in China in 1855 and then spread to India, on to the Pacific islands and, towards the end of that century, to South America; it caused the death of more than 10 million people before it reach South Africa in 1901.

PLAGUE: 1901

During the Anglo Boer War (1898-1902), fodder for military horses had to be imported from Argentina, because of the 'scorched-earth' policy. With it into Table Bay came rats and their fleas, laden with *Yersinia pestis*. Despite aggressive rat hunting, the epidemic took hold: within a year, in Cape Town more than 700 cases of Bubonic Plague had been reported and half had died. The incidence of the plague declined from seventy-five new cases per week in May 1901 to three in September in the same year. It came at a cost: 40% mortality amongst active cases.

That was not the end of the plague in South Africa; the disease also appeared at other ports of entry and then penetrated inland as it followed the railway transportation routes. The epidemic lingered in South Africa until 1904.

COVID-19

It started in China's Wuhan Province in December 2019, possibly via interspecies transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease. Respiratory transmission to other people caused its spread to the rest of the world. On 6 March 2020, COVID-19 arrived in South Africa via travellers returning by air from Europe. On 27 March, South Africa went into nation-wide lockdown: there were 1117 cases of the disease in the country, and a few days later the first patient died of the disease.

As of today, just 141 days later, South Africa has 573,000 known cases of the disease and 11,270 deaths. What can we learn from history? The virus was accidently brought into the country; it took hold; as a nation we were taken by surprise, given little advance warning; it spreads like wildfire; indiscriminately it causes death and destruction; it lingers; incidence will eventually decline; most of the nation will recover; in many ways we will be able to start over; eventually it will become just another page in history; in some or other form, at some future time in history, it will return.

(This is an edited version of an article written by a medical Doctor--MB ChB and PhD (Med)--with an interest in pulmonology and respiratory research)

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #57: FRIDAY 07 AUGUST 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+68(L3)=DAY 134



Yes, this Newsflash will be repeating some points you have heard before (some may even mutter 'Yes, ad nauseam'!). Yes, CovidCom is criticized by some for what they perceive as 'all talk, no action'. Yes, for everyone in the MHA family, our patience and coping mechanisms are almost running on empty. Yes, we've all just about had enough! The reality, though, is that this country is almost reaching the pinnacle of the fight against the invisible enemy, the silent assassin; the virus called Covid-19. As a nation, as a city, and as the MHA family, we have come so far in the fight; we have to persevere, to stick together, in order to triumph and survive. Please read on!

A bestseller WWII book about D-Day called "The Longest Day" is divided into three parts: the first part is titled "The Wait", the second part "The Night" and the third part "The Day". In the fight against Covid-19 we made all the necessary preparations, sacrifices and adjustments during The Wait. We are now into The Night, where fear is amplified, where it's difficult to see what's ahead, to differentiate between friend and foe, to make meaningful progress; it's a time to rely on the preparations and progress already made, and get ready for the final push. Our faith and courage will carry us into The Day; to defeat the enemy, and move to a time and place in the future when we can proclaim victory.

Where do we find ourselves today? Let's take stock. As a community, many MHA residents in our villages and bedsitters have reached the point where damaging psychological and emotional cracks are appearing with more frequency, impacting negatively on individuals, and on the community in which they live and on which they rely. Our elderly residents are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the issues of loneliness, uncertainty, fear of being infected or infecting, boredom, isolation, 'cabin fever', media overload and rumours, rules and regulations (government and MHA) which interfere with their independence; helplessness, frustration over lack of cleaning and gardening facilities, threat to income; resignation to the prospect of the pandemic stretching into 2021 and maybe even longer, and grieving the loss of people they knew but for whom they cannot properly mourn; the loss of independence, the loss of routine and stimulating events, and the loss of the world as they knew it. Many of these coping challenges equally face our wonderful staff. We, the MHA family, are not alone in this.

CovidCom is committed to continue making decisions to contain this damage, but we cannot and will not break laws, and we need to move forward with caution. The Government gazette dealing with Lockdown Level 3 prohibits people from visiting friends and families in their homes. That's the law of the land, and CovidCom has no option other than to abide by that. We know that visiting is happening with MHA village residents; receiving visitors or going out to visit. MHA does not have the capacity to police this, neither should it do so. The current and crazy reality is that the law allows MHA village residents to meet friends and family outside of the Village confines; at the beachfront, in a shopping

mall, at a restaurant or casino or at many other busy public places, but not in the relative safety of their own cottage. People are allowed to crowd into a 16-seater taxi yet an individual is prohibited from sitting at home with a next-door neighbour. All of this frustrates and confuses us.

In the face of all of this, our residents across all our facilities have, almost without exception, been stoic, courageous, accepting, compliant with government/MHA rules and regulations, supportive of one another, and protective of their own and their neighbours' health, safety and welfare. They are to be commended for that. Bedsitter and Epworth Close residents are significantly worse off, having been locked in since late March. None of this would have been achieved without the magnificent support and dedication of our Managers and all other staff.

As a country and as a city we are reaching the eye of the Covid-19 storm; the national statistics below tell the harrowing story of what we are dealing with:

PERIOD	COVID CASES	COVID DEATHS
As at 7 March	2	0
As at 7 April	1749	13
As at 7 May	8232	161
As at 7 June	48285	998
As at 7 July	215855	3502
As at 7 August	538000	9604

Some members of CovidCom met with the Village Managers on 6 August, and we share the following with you:

- It was agreed by all those attending that MHA needs to continue to be proactive but conservative in its decision-making, as it applies to the welfare of residents and staff
- Changes need to be made, especially where the psychological and emotional welfare of our Village residents is being adversely affected, but we can't rush this, or open the floodgates
- The four areas which need our ongoing and urgent focus are Visitors, Carers, Private Housekeepers/Domestics, and Private Gardeners. There was considerable and productive debate on all four issues, none of which has a simple solution. As we have explained to residents and/or family, CovidCom will not create precedents by entertaining individual requests, for reasons thoroughly explained (we have 319 cottages and 570 residents to consider)
- CovidCom cannot make changes which will knowingly increase the risk of the virus entering our facilities, and we will continue to err on the side of safety, bearing in mind the age and vulnerability of residents
- CovidCom is not procrastinating on these issues, but it is not wise to rush into making decisions which may then need to be reversed (Australia and the USA are currently prime examples of that). Continued patience and acceptance is absolutely key here, but ultimately it is a resident's choice to comply or not, and to be a part of the solution and not the problem. We ask everyone, residents and staff alike, to walk down this road with us.

MHA's statistics as at 12h00 today are:

FACILITY	# OF POSITIVE RESIDENTS	# OF POSITIVE STAFF	# DE-ISOLATED	# STILL ISOLATED
CP Bradfield		12	12	
CP Bradfield	10		10	
Bedsitters	1		1	
Maranatha FC		6	6	
Maranatha FC	8		8	
Maranatha Village		1	1	
Maintenance		1	1	
Aldersgate	1		1	
Epworth Close	1		1	
Head Office		1		1
TOTALS	21	21	41	1

Let us usher in the weekend with these powerful words from TS Eliot:

“To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing:
that is enough for one man’s life”