



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Danielle Sydnor  
**Chair**

Cecil Lipscomb  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair**

Denita Bonhart  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair**

William D. Ginn, Esq.  
**Secretary**

Barbara Bray  
**Recording Secretary**

Rufus Heard  
**Treasurer**

Jean Allen-Jenkins\*  
Alexis Clark-Amison  
William Beargie, CPA, CFP  
Bette Bonder, Ph.D., OTR/L.  
Jocelyn T. Booker\*  
Ruth B. Fore  
Dorris Jackson♦  
Ronald V. Johnson  
Frederick C. Kelly\*  
Dorothy Mercer\*  
Diana Morris, PhD, RN  
Linda Newsom\*  
Honorable Benita Pearson\*  
Mildred Talbot Redon\*  
Sheryl Sereda♦  
Rufus Sims, Esq.  
Donald C. Williams, Esq.\*

Teena Mitchell  
**President, Auxiliary I**

Gwendolyn James  
**President, Auxiliary II**

Zadie Barber  
**President, Auxiliary III**

Danny R. Williams, JD, MNO, LNHA  
**President and CEO**

\*Past Board Chair  
•Life Trustee  
♦Honorary Trustee

## Ohio House of Representatives Aging & Long Term Care Committee Meeting: May 28, 2020

Public Testimony regarding COVID-19's impact on nursing homes and long term care facilities

### Submitted by:

Danny R. Williams, JD, MNO, LNHA, President & CEO  
Eliza Bryant Village, 7201 Wade Park Avenue, Cleveland OH 44103  
Contact: (216)658-1821; [dwilliams@elizabryant.org](mailto:dwilliams@elizabryant.org).

*Eliza Bryant Village, located on 17 acres in Cleveland's Hough neighborhood, has been an anchor institution in the community for nearly 125 years. As the oldest continually operating African American-founded long-term care facility in the United States, we serve approximately 1,200 seniors annually with more than 200 compassionate employees and hundreds of dedicated volunteers, Eliza Bryant Village provides essential services for seniors along the continuum of care in a safe, dignified and compassionate environment. We offer skilled nursing, with memory-care and rehabilitation, an adult day care and senior outreach program that includes transportation and nutritious meals, affordable independent senior housing, as well as on-site dialysis care. Home care and community transportation are available to seniors at the Village as well as our aging neighbors. Our new Elder Justice Center provides temporary safe housing and support services for older adults needing refuge from some form of abuse, trauma, violence and/or criminal victimization while we work with community partners to find them permanent housing in a safe environment.*

As a small, nonprofit organization operating in one of the poorest areas of the county, and serving some of the sickest and most vulnerable of our citizens, Eliza Bryant Village has experienced significant hardships as a result of COVID-19 - - this unprecedented public health emergency. The natural grief we all experience due to the loss of so many lives, both locally and world-wide, is palpable. Some of the other significant examples of COVID-19's impact include:

### Damage to emotional health of residents and staff:

- Residents are experiencing sadness and depression due to the inability to visit with family and friends and the absence of supportive volunteers.
- Staff are experiencing high levels of stress due to fear, fatigue, Facebook and the negative image of nursing homes in the media.
- Because of insufficient staffing available in the marketplace, some staff are being asked to work longer hours than optimal, resulting in concerns about burnout.

### Damage to our reputation in the community:

- Because of the population we serve, many with serious pre-existing medical conditions, one would expect that our residents would experience a higher incidence of infections and a greater number of fatalities than the general

**Damage to our reputation in the community (continued):**

population; however little effort is being made to help the public understand those circumstances

- It is human nature to seek to place blame when unfortunate events occur. Consequently, nursing homes are being cast in a negative light because we are often the last home of some very sick and vulnerable individuals before they expire.
- Because of the almost exclusive focus on the fatalities and other devastating health consequences from this pandemic, there has been little room for, or interest in, any positive media about the value nursing homes provide in society.
- Due to the cancellation of many meetings and other gatherings, the ability of nursing homes to build and maintain organizational relationships and to project a positive community presence has been severely limited.

**Lost revenue:**

- The Village has temporarily closed its Adult Day Program for safety reasons, and it is unclear how many will return to the program when we re-open.
- The census in the Village's nursing home operations is down nearly 25% from the level a few months ago, and it will be a challenge rebuilding that population and replacing the lost revenue.
- Our expected funding from the Ohio Atty. Gen.'s Victims of Crime Act fund will likely be down because many of the services we were providing with such funding have been temporarily diminished or suspended.
- Several of our annual fundraising events, particularly those conducted by our three Auxiliaries, have been canceled.

**Added expenses:**

- We have instituted hazard pay just to maintain a core group of essential front-line staff.
- We are experiencing higher than normal overtime costs.
- To the extent they have been available, we are paying a significant premium for agency staffing.
- Costs for PPE and cleaning and sanitizing supplies are much higher than normal levels.

These examples represent the most pressing and obvious consequences of this pandemic. Other impacts will undoubtedly emerge as the aftershocks from this outbreak are felt.