

family update

May 26, 2020

Dear families,

We are grateful to let you know that we continue to be free of COVID-19 at our centres. We would like to thank our staff for their tireless efforts in adhering to all public health directives and being extremely careful with their own health. It has taken the commitment of every single person—staff, residents, and yourselves—to keep COVID-19 at bay.

We are doing our best to boost our staff and thank them for their wonderful efforts. Earlier this month, we initiated a campaign, *Pause and Take Care*, to support staff to take a few minutes to rest and recharge. We posted short Ted Talks on our intranet each day and invited the team to take five minutes to watch a funny or thought-provoking speaker. Ice cream carts have also made the rounds at our centres offering a summertime treat.



There are several important update that we would like to share with you:

Outdoor visitation

Outdoor visits are going well thanks to your understanding and cooperation. Please continue to work with the team at your centre to schedule outdoor visits. While the province has begun its relaunch strategy, it is important to note that there have not been any further changes in continuing care and supportive living centres. **COVID-19 continues to exist and residents continue to be among the most vulnerable to severe effects from the virus.**

For outdoor visits, please remember that:

- Visits must be requested by the designated essential visitor or the resident (note: a designated essential visitor is someone who is required to assist in carrying out the quality of life or care related activities that staff are unable to provide)
- Visits must be pre-arranged and scheduled with the sites
- Visits can have a maximum of three people—the resident, the designated essential visitor, and one other
- Outdoor visits must practice social distancing; everyone must be a minimum of six feet away from one another
- Everyone involved with outdoor visits must wear masks continuously

- Visitors are responsible for bringing their own masks; masks must fit well and cover the nose and mouth
- Visitors must remain outside and cannot enter the building
- A resident who is in isolation cannot participate in outdoor visits
- Visits are dependent on staff availability
- If the outdoor space can only be accessed from within the building visitors will need to undergo complete screening and instruction on proper use of personal protective equipment
- Outdoor visitation will not be permitted if the centre is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak

Single site employment

Under the orders of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, all employees in continuing care and supportive living centres can work at only one centre for the duration of the pandemic. Moving to single site employment took a great deal of coordination since many staff work at more than one centre. We worked closely with the provincial government and Alberta Health Services, and, as of this week, all our employees work at one site only.

Approximately 148 of our staff who worked at another site were asked to work with their other employer. Alberta Health had to ensure that there weren't gaps in staffing at any centres across the province. These staff were placed on a leave of absence. We look forward to welcoming them back once the pandemic is over.

Accommodation and sundry fees

Earlier this year, you received a notice indicating that there was going to be an increase in sundry fees such as the entertainment package and laundry. We are deferring the increase for the time being. The provincial government has also deferred the increase in accommodation fees.

Teamwork

You may have heard on the news that the provincial government is applying a \$2/hour top up for Health Care Aides retroactive to April 20. The majority of our staff are Health Care Aides; they are the ones who tend to provide the bulk of the personal care for your loved ones. Please remember that it takes a team to care for residents—nursing, therapeutics, maintenance, housekeeping, food and support services, and administrative staff. Everyone has responsibilities and everyone contributes, in an important way, to ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing, and comfort of your loved one.



Essential worker fundraiser

Covenant Foundation has produced a line of frontline t-shirts recognizing essential workers who have been working especially hard since the beginning of the pandemic. Funds raised through the t-shirts directly support residents, patients, and staff at Covenant Care, Covenant Living, and Covenant Health. T-shirts can be ordered online at:

https://frontline.printmachine.ca/frontline_fundraiser_by_covenan/shop/home

As always, please contact your Site Administrator with questions or send them to us at admin@covenantcare.ca. For the most recent information on the pandemic please see ahs.ca/COVID.

Daily COVID-19 updates, information on visitor guidelines, and good news stories are available at covenantcare.ca—please check it out!

Stay healthy and well,

Derrick Bernardo
President

JoAnn Molloy
Vice-President, Resident Experience

PS: Please see the next page for a dose of joy. Thanks to a wonderful staff initiative, residents who are retired nurses were celebrated this month—the smiles on their faces are exactly why we come to work each day!

Celebrating retired nurses

In recognition of Nurses Week, our team celebrated retired nurses who are now residents at Villa Marie. Retired nurses were honoured with flowers, cards, cupcakes, and a traditional nurses cap. It was a proud and uplifting day. Two of our retired nurse residents are over 100 years old and one was a nurse for 65 years!

