

# family update

April 30, 2020

Dear families,

We hope you are keeping healthy and safe. As the weather begins to warm and we can feel spring in the air and in our bones, please remember to continue to be vigilant in practicing all precautions to keep yourselves and your families healthy.

We are grateful to let you know that we do not currently have a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak at any of our centres.

There are several important update that we would like to share with you resulting from the new orders released by the Chief Medical Officer of Health yesterday afternoon.

## Outdoor visitation

One of the new orders allows for residents to enjoy outdoor visits with up to two other individuals. Please note that the order is not meant to open up visitation in continuing care and supportive living centres.

**Residents continue to be among the most vulnerable to severe effects from COVID-19. An increase in visitors to our centres also increases the risk of transmission. We must maintain all precautions and be thoughtful about how best to facilitate the outdoor visitations that minimizes risk to both residents and staff. We will need some time to determine how to coordinate the outdoor visits; please be patient with us as we work through these processes.**

There are several stipulations for outdoor visits that are important for you to know:

- 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

It is important for you to assess the benefit of the outdoor visits for your loved one and for yourselves in terms of physical health, safety, and emotional wellbeing. This has undoubtedly been a very difficult time. You have been visiting with your loved ones virtually and we know you are eager to see them in person. We are responsible for the safety of your loved one and must do what we can to support their wellbeing.

If you would like to schedule an outdoor visit please contact your Site Administrator. Requests for visits must be made by the resident or the designated essential visitor only.

And, again, please give us a few days to determine how best to facilitate outdoor visits. There are a number of considerations we must work through to better assess outdoor visit requests including extra required staffing, scheduling, physical distancing, and ease of access to green space. We will do our best to accommodate requests and ask for your flexibility and understanding.

### End of life visitation

The Chief Medical Officer of Health's order clarifies that visitation is permitted when a resident is within two weeks of end of life. While it is difficult to be precise about this timeframe, our clinical team will do their very best to assess each situation carefully and thoughtfully to allow visitors to have as much time as possible with their loved one.

The new order indicates that:

- Visits must be pre-arranged and scheduled with the site
- The designated essential visitor can enter the building and approve other family members, religious leaders, children, and friends to visit
- In most instances, only one visitor can be present in the building at a time
- Visitors must wear masks and, if appropriate, additional personal protective equipment as deemed by the centre
- Visitors must practice hand hygiene and wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer before entering and leaving the resident's room

### Outbreak definitions

There is a change in how outbreaks are being characterized. As you know, over the last few weeks, we have been using the terms suspected, probable, and confirmed. The Chief Medical Officer of Health has refined the terms. The [Covenant Care website](#) has been updated to reflect these changes. Please continue to visit the site for daily updates on the status of our centres.

Status	Definition
Outbreak prevention	No residents or staff show any symptoms of COVID-19
Site under investigation	At least one resident or staff exhibits at least one symptom of COVID-19
Confirmed outbreak	Any one individual is confirmed to have COVID-19 Confirmed outbreaks are being publicly reported <a href="#">here</a>

### Thank you

This is a long road we are journeying together—and one that is constantly shifting and evolving with new information and evidence. We are not forgetting, even for a moment, that the residents in our care are among the most vulnerable in this pandemic. We are concerned for their health and safety and that of our staff who, everyday, are showing incredible resilience, determination, and compassion in caring for your loved ones.

Each of us have made important decisions that have helped our centre to stay free of COVID-19. I am proud of our team for their diligence. This journey is asking so much of all of us—residents, staff, and yourselves—to be patient, understanding, and kind.

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

Please stay healthy and well.

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