

resident, staff, and family update

December 17, 2021 Dear residents, staff, and families,

We hope you are keeping warm and safe.

Earlier today, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released a letter to continuing care operators regarding a change in visitor and volunteer screening. While the scientific and public health community continue to learn about the new Omicron variant, early indications are that it spreads more easily than the Delta variant.

As a precautionary measure, effective immediately, all visitors and volunteers who have known or probable contact with COVID cannot enter our centres for 14 days from last known contact. This applies to all visitors and volunteers, regardless of vaccine status. We have received a new screening tool that we will be using when visitors or volunteers arrive.

The definition of close contact articulated by the Chief Medical Officer of Health is face-to-face contact within two metres for 15 minutes or longer, direct physical contact (such as hugging), and/or contact with infectious bodily fluids. The definition of probable contact is close contact with a confirmed case, exposure to a known outbreak, or lab exposure to biological material known to contain COVID-19.

Deferred visits with known or probable contact and the updated screening tool are interim measures to prevent Omicron from entering continuing care sites. Alberta Health is also reviewing other protocols and policies to minimize risk of transmission—we expect to hear more about those changes next week.

Earlier this week, the provincial government announced that Albertans over the age of 50 and health care staff are eligible to receive the third dose of the COVID immunization. Vaccines are available at pharmacies. If you have not yet received any of the COVID immunizations, we strongly encourage you to do so. Immunization continues to be critical to lowering transmission and severity of illness.

As we begin to enter the holiday season, please continue to do all you can to stay safe and healthy. If you are gathering with others outside of your household please consider taking a rapid test as a precautionary measure. Rapid testing kits are available free of charge from pharmacies and Albert Health Services sites throughout the in the province. You can find a listing of locations on the following website: <https://www.alberta.ca/rapid-testing-at-home.aspx>.

We will keep you informed as we hear of any further changes. Please direct any concerns or questions to your Site Administrator, Janine Ollenberger or one of us. You can also email admin@covenantcare.ca.

Please do all you can to stay well and be healthy.

Michelle Charlesworth

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Resident Experience Director

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