

Information Bulletin #9 – June 16, 2020 About Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

For all Residents, Families, Staff, and Friends of Homeland Housing

On June 12, 2020 Phase II of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy was introduced allowing gradual reopening of businesses, resuming activities, and getting people back to work. While the worst may seem behind us, we need to remind ourselves that COVID-19 is still in the community and the choices we make during the relaunch affects the health and wellbeing of our family, friends, and residents living in seniors' lodges and supportive living settings. For this reason, government and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw have taken a **slower and more measured response to lifting restrictions for continuing care settings** to minimize the risk of COVID-19 to you, your neighbours, and the staff.

Homeland Housing recognizes this has been a challenging and stressful time for everyone, and to date, through everyone's efforts, we had no cases of COVID-19 at our sites. I extend my deep appreciation for your efforts and sacrifices over the past three months; it has not been an easy time.

The purpose of Bulletin #9 is to remind residents, families, and staff of the legal directives from the Chief Medical Officer of Health currently in place for seniors' lodges, supportive living, and long-term care sites within Homeland Housing and across the province.

Designated Outdoor Visits continue between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm daily. Visits must be scheduled by the resident or designated essential visitor by calling the site during regular business hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm daily). The current directive requires the designated essential visitor to be in attendance for all visits.

Visitor Restrictions continue as outlined in the CMOH Order 08-2020. The Designated Essential Visitor may be provided site access if a resident's care needs cannot be met by on-site staff or AHS or for end-of-life care. In these situations, the Designated Essential Visitor must pre-arrange visits with the site manager.

Visiting in the Community is allowed under the directive, however **discouraged until June 25, 2020** to allow time for public health to determine the effectiveness of infection control practices during the economic relaunch. Visiting in the community, going shopping and being around others increase the possibility of contracting the infection, then returning to the lodge and spreading it to other residents and staff.

Over the past week, we have seen an increase of COVID-19 cases in the Edmonton Zone, with 2/3 of the cases attributed to family gatherings, so we ask you to practice caution if you choose to go out into the community. We want you to be safe, so please remember to:

- Sign out that you are leaving the lodge property. This is required for contact tracing if you are diagnosed with COVID-19. Sign out books are located at reception and after hours near the front entry of the lodge;
- Practice hand hygiene, use alcohol-based hand rub when leaving the lodge;
- Maintain physical distancing of 2 metres or 6 feet, this includes family members and friends;
- While difficult, physical contact such as handshaking, touching or hugging should be avoided;
- Do not share food or drinks;
- Practice frequent hand hygiene and avoid touching your face;
- Always wear a mask and ask anyone you may be in contact with to also wear a mask. You can obtain a mask(s) from reception/administration at your site;
- If you are using a taxi service to attend appointments, your taxi driver should be wearing a mask and ask you to sit in the back seat to promote physical distancing; and

- Self-monitor your health for fever, new or worsening cough, breathing, vomiting and diarrhea. If you have any of these symptoms, **immediately report** them to a staff member.

Upon return to site, please remember to:

- Practice hand hygiene, use alcohol-based hand rub upon entering the lodge;
- Complete a health screening questionnaire to assess health risk; and
- Submit to a temperature check for a fever. Should you have a temperature greater than 37.8C, you will be required to self-isolate and be tested for COVID-19. The isolation period is 14 days.

Restricted Public Access continues, with our Lodge and Supportive Living sites locked 24 hours daily. Deliveries such as medication, grocery items, and other incidentals should be delivered between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm Monday to Friday.

Staff Screening continues for site staff, homecare and AHS. Upon arrival to work, staff complete a health questionnaire and have their temperature taken. Staff feeling unwell, or with a temperature of 38C or greater will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and be tested for COVID-19.

Resident Surveillance continues with daily monitoring of your health status and having your temperature taken. If you have new or worsening COVID-19 like symptoms and a temperature above 37.8 C, you must self isolate for 14 days and arrangements will be made for you to receive COVID-19 testing.

Dining Services continue to be modified with two residents at each table and tables spaced two metres apart wherever possible. Restrictions on the use of cloth napkins and condiment containers remain in place.

Enhanced Cleaning continues with emphasis on cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces such as bathrooms, door handles, elevator buttons, common area furnishings, and resident use recreation equipment and computers. During a confirmed outbreak, resident room high touch areas and bathrooms are disinfected twice daily.

Staff Use of Medical Procedure Masks continue for staff members providing direct resident care or in other circumstances when maintaining physical distancing is not always possible. Examples include during meal service, cleaning resident rooms with the resident present, or maintaining a resident's room.

Virtual Visits continue and each of our sites have a community computer(s) available for you to video conference with family and friends. Recreation and administrative staff would be pleased to set up a virtual visit for you.

I know this is a difficult time for everyone, and after three months of battling COVID-19 we yearn for a return to normal. However, we must remember at this time, there is no vaccine for COVID-19, which means the virus will be in our communities for some time to come. **Only by working together, can we keep each other safe**, so I urge you to continue practicing hand hygiene, using alcohol-based hand rub when hand washing facilities are not available, maintaining physical distancing, and wearing a face mask when out in the community or visiting with family and friends.

For further up-to-date reputable information about COVID-19 and the latest directives from Alberta Health and the Government of Alberta, please visit the website links listed below.

Take care and stay well,

Raymond Cormie
Chief Executive Officer
Homeland Housing

For the Latest Information about COVID-19

Government of Alberta www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx

Alberta Health Services www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx

Government of Canada www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html