



2020.04.09

Dear Family Members,

We are reaching out to you as Administrator, Director of Resident Care, and Physicians at Strathmere Lodge. We hope all of you are keeping well during this stressful time. The world and local news is full of information around COVID-19 but we wanted to take a moment to reach out to you to discuss more specifically how we are preparing at Strathmere Lodge and how this could affect your loved one. This is a difficult letter for us to write and we know, a difficult letter for you to read.

The symptoms of COVID-19 have been shown to be quite varied. In the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, the illness is often more severe and the death rate is extremely high. We are working so hard to prevent our residents from being exposed to this organism. In following public health and ministry guidelines, as you already know, we have had to stop allowing family, visitors (non-essential) and volunteers into our residence. As you are not here in person right now, please know that behind the scenes, our staff has been working tirelessly to have all contingencies and policies in place to avoid or mitigate an outbreak. Despite all of our precautions, an outbreak may still happen.

Some of the things we are doing to safeguard our residents' health are as follows:

1. **Employees** – All employees are screened at the beginning of their shift and when they leave for their shift. Screening includes questions related to COVID-19 symptoms, any contact with confirmed or suspect cases, and a temperature check. Staff are expected and encouraged to wash hands regularly with hand sanitizer or soap and water. As well all staff in facility are required to wear mask at all times, except on breaks, for the duration of their shift.
2. **Social Distancing** – All employees are encouraged to maintain social distancing of 2 metres as much as possible. We have provided extra break spaces for staff to help with maintaining social distancing.
3. **Hospital Transfers** – During this pandemic, if we suspect COVID-19 symptoms we will be testing, treating and isolating residents within their home area. Treatment of COVID-19 is entirely “supportive care”. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses and will not be used unless Physician believes there to be an underlying bacterial infection. There are no anti-viral treatments for COVID-19. Ventilator support is not appropriate for people in long term care facilities with chronic disease as the outcome is universally poor in these patients. Hospitals will be operating at greater than maximum capacity and cannot offer our residents anything more than we can provide for them at their home.

The safest and most comfortable place for your loved one is to be cared for at Strathmere Lodge. Physicians have learned that there is no benefit for seniors with COVID-19 to go to the hospital and they would not survive intensive care. At Strathmere Lodge we have taken steps to ensure that we have the equipment and personnel to bring the same level of treatment these residents would receive in the hospital. If it becomes clear that a resident with COVID-19 is not improving with supportive measures, we will be discussing and instituting end of life care measures. Our nurses are very skilled in providing comfort measures and a COVID-19 illness would be no different in that regard.

We remain dedicated to our residents, your loved ones and thank you in advance for your patience and understanding in these trying times. Our hearts go out to you during this distressing time.

We will continue to follow public health and ministry guidelines as we navigate through this pandemic.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact DRC – Crystal Brooks at 519-245-2520, ext. 6228.

Dr. Philip Vandewalle
Medical Director

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