

To: To all Residents, Families, Visitors, 3rd Party Providers and Volunteers

Date: March 25, 2020

Re: COVID Update

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We are continuously monitoring information from official health organizations and planning and adjusting for service continuity considering new information received daily.

The message that media outlets, health authorities, provincial and federal government representatives are consistently emphasizing is for all of us to practice social distancing and wash our hands frequently to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. While these mandates impact our activities in Hamlets communities, they are vital as we do our part to flatten the curve and eventually eliminate the virus from our lives.

### **Resident appointments**

There has been a question on whether residents can still go out to appointments in the community. The answer right now is still “if absolutely necessary, then yes” but *please be aware* that this might change at any moment considering the recent announcements in Ontario.

- We again ask that trips into the community only be for necessary medical or health appointments and nothing else.
- Please contact the Hamlets care team well ahead of time to arrange a time to meet your loved one at the main entrance, and we will arrange to have them ready at the agreed time. We do reserve the right to isolate a resident upon their return to the home if we believe there was a risk of an exposure while in the community.
- Unfortunately, we are unable to allow any visitors into the building currently. Exceptions for situations that involve a loved one who is palliative will be made.

Please note that if the Hamlet home does have an outbreak that any trips into the community will need to be cancelled until the outbreak at the home is declared over.

## **Life as Normal as possible**

Despite the challenges of this outbreak, we continue striving to allow as much normal life as possible. One question we have been asked is “If I live at the Hamlets in Assisted or Independent Living can I visit my partner who lives in a higher level of care at The Hamlets?”. Unless otherwise directed by the local Health Authority or Provincial Health Authority in the future, we will do everything we can to facilitate these visits. Please be assured that we will take the necessary precautions in terms of infection control.

We are also doing our best to support social distancing within our Hamlet homes. This often means changes to the usual activities that our residents enjoy on a regular basis, but it does **not** mean all activities have been cancelled. The teams are striving to reimagine daily activities for our residents that are meaningful, but also can be done in smaller gatherings of residents so that social distancing can be maintained.

## **Communication**

Every effort is being made to keep abreast of the latest information and direction from health officials. Given the high stakes should an outbreak occur, you may find at times that we are being more proactive than what is being reported by the media. Some have asked why we are taking this a conservative approach and the simple answer is that we want to do what we can to protect residents, their families and our team, as well as contribute to societal efforts to flatten the curve.

As the status of the outbreak changes, so will our response; we will do our best to share what we know with residents and their families. Please do not hesitate to ask questions of the teams at your Hamlet home. Be gracious if the team member you ask does not know the answer in that moment, and trust that he or she will pass the question on and ensure someone provides a response to your questions. We will also do our best to hold daily meetings on site with any of the residents that are able and interested to hear the latest in the work that is being done to manage the situation. Our Websites and Facebook pages will also be kept up to date with the latest information.

## **Contracted health care workers**

As the number of Covid-19 affected Canadians increases, the guidelines surrounding outside contracted health care workers to provide care to residents in multiple locations is increasingly coming under review. Right now, there is no directive to stop allowing contracted health care workers to provide services but that of course is subject to change.

Please do check regularly with your local Hamlet home to ensure you are aware of the home's latest status i.e. are they in outbreak or not? Please be reminded that if any contracted health care worker has symptoms of COVID 19 they are not come to the Hamlet home and must report that they are experiencing these symptoms. And if a contracted health care worker visits another home in the community that does have an outbreak, we would ask that this worker check with the Hamlet home before attending, to ensure entry will be permitted. Please be prepared for interruptions in service should there continue to be escalations in the pandemic. Again, we will do our utmost to keep you informed.

### **Together we can do this**

Our relationship with residents and families is important. This is an unprecedented time for everyone, and we ask you to stay connected with us, and let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you at this time.

We continue to value your support and our goal is to ensure that we continue to provide a safe home and service excellence to those living at The Hamlets.