

October 26, 2020

AR 179233

All Edmonton Zone Licensed Supportive Living, Long-Term Care and Hospice Operators

RE: Rising COVID-19 Case Numbers and Safe Visiting Policy (CMOH Order 29-2020)

Dear Staff and Operators:

I am writing to express my concern with respect to the rising COVID-19 case numbers in the Edmonton Zone and to direct you to reassess your site Safe Visiting Policy (required per CMOH Order 29-2020) at this time, given the increase in risk of COVID-19 introductions to your sites. I would recommend at this time that only those visiting persons identified as designated family/support persons (and others in extenuating circumstances) are permitted to visit residents within the site.

Only in rare circumstances, and after consultation with public health or a Medical Officer of Health, should a site consider additional restrictions for designated family/support persons. The presence of designated family/support persons must be supported as essential to the maintenance of resident mental and physical health, even in an outbreak situation.

This said, I encourage you to speak to designated family/support persons right away and ask that they evaluate their own need to be physically present (based on resident need), to help in limiting the amount of people entering your site. They should be supported to consider virtual options to connecting with residents.

Now more than ever it is important to continue regular and ongoing communication with residents, families and visiting persons and ensure their involvement in the planning and site policy re-assessment process. If you have questions about this, please contact ASAL@gov.ab.ca or call 780-644-8428.

Thank you for your support and shared commitment to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and for the ongoing hard work you are putting in to keep your residents and staff safe.

Yours sincerely,

Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health

cc: John Cabral, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Service Delivery, Alberta Health
Trish Merrithew-Mercredi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health and Compliance, Alberta Health