

December 18, 2020

AR 181454

**RE: Enhanced Public Health Measures & Congregate Care Settings**

To all licenced supportive living, long-term care and hospice families:

Since my last letter dated November 20, 2020, additional measures have been introduced for all Albertans to address the rapidly rising case numbers of COVID-19 in the province and the increasing strain on our healthcare system.

I am writing to you again to reinforce the expectations of you in your support of someone in supportive living, long-term care or hospice. The new restrictions announced on December 8, 2020, will impact resident life both on-site and off-site, as well as the off-site services or activities that they engage in. These restrictions will be in place at least until January 11 and will be reassessed at that time.

The new restrictions are intended to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure by limiting the activities of all Albertans, including residents and families/friends like yourselves. If you assist residents with necessary outings, please take all public health precautions and encourage them to opt for curbside pick up (if not delivery) over in-store purchases. As all indoor and outdoor social gathering is prohibited, I encourage you to connect with residents virtually and over the phone. If you are a designated family/support person, you will still be able to assist the resident in their room or in a shared care area, following all safe visiting practices and operator safe visiting policy. Please speak with the operator for more information. I am asking all designated family/support persons to limit your presence on site. Though you can be there to maintain resident mental and physical health and wellbeing, if there is any other way to meet those needs without coming to the site, please do so.

These restrictions are especially difficult to bear as we head into a season of shared celebration. Although residents who are not quarantined or isolated are permitted to visit one another in natural, self-directed ways, please help them consider how they can limit the number of contacts they have.

Some services offered on-site will no longer be able to operate fully (e.g. amenities accessible to the public, hair salons and other personal wellness services) but health and accommodation services (e.g. laundry, housekeeping, meals, personal care like hair washing, and recreation activities) will all continue undisrupted.

Operators and staff continue to go above and beyond to ensure the comfort and wellbeing of the resident(s) you care for, as well as the same for all of the other residents and staff in the building. Please extend kindness, understanding and patience to them. If you have any questions or concerns about what has changed and what hasn't, please ask the site administrator for information. As the situation is rapidly evolving, you can find the most up to date information here [www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx).

Please understand that these measures are necessary to protect each other at this critical time. It is critical that you remain vigilant in your actions to protect yourself and those around you.

Thank you for continuing to prioritize public health advice to protect your safety, and the safety of those around you. We remain in this together.

Yours sincerely,



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

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