

Dear Residents, Families and all in the Extendicare Community,

**Re: COVID-19**

For the last few months, COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has dominated the news cycle and caused concern in our communities and across the globe. The care and safety of our residents, clients, patients, team members and families are our top priority. I am writing to assure you that we take the COVID-19 situation very seriously and we are following Public Health Authority directives to ensure everyone's safety.

To align with directives set by the Public Health Agency of Canada, our homes and communities are prohibited from allowing non-essential visitors. Please know we understand the importance of connecting with your family member or friend, especially during stressful and uncertain times. Even though we are no longer able to provide a space for in-person interaction, the communication between families and friends and residents will not come to an end. We encourage you to maintain the connection through technology. Many families and friends have stayed connected through telephone calls, FaceTime, Skype and other platforms.

We appreciate your cooperation in the best interest of everyone's safety. We are all in this together and our objective is to keep everyone safe.

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a new coronavirus first discovered in Wuhan China. Common signs of COVID-19 infection include fever, respiratory symptoms, cough and sneezing. In more severe cases, infection can cause shortness of breath, pneumonia and respiratory failure requiring a ventilator. More severe cases are seen in older people and those with pre-existing medical problems.

## What is Extendicare doing about COVID-19?

Extendicare activated our incident management system (IMS) comprised of infection prevention and control experts and supported by leaders from across the company. The IMS team meets daily to develop and implement strategies to manage the virus threat, and ensures we are current with our practices in prevention and doing everything we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our homes. We work closely with Public Health Authorities across Canada and follow their directives. Rest assured, our team members are trained and prepared and have measures in place to protect everyone's safety including:

- Securing sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all staff
- All staff are required to wear masks while in our homes and retirement communities, and while providing care to patients/clients in the community

- Distributing educational materials on COVID-19 to our team members, including current information from the Public Health Agency of Canada
- Posters illustrating how to use personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Screening all employees and residents twice daily, including taking temperatures
- Reminders that hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infections
- Ensuring that hand sanitizer is available for all staff
- Continued daily monitoring of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and World Health Organization directives regarding required responses to COVID-19

## What can you do?

- **Protect Yourself and Others** – Follow hand hygiene guidelines: wash hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not available), avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, coughing etiquette: cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and proceed to throw out the tissue and wash your hands, get your flu shot, and refrain from visiting if you are ill or have symptoms. We all play a part in slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- **Stay Informed** – Information regarding COVID-19 changes daily. Watch for updated communications on COVID-19 subjects such as screening and isolation procedures, recommended prevention activities, travel advisories etc. by following the Public Health Agency of Canada.

- **Don't Panic!** – There is a lot of misinformation about COVID-19 out there: calm and measured reactions to COVID-19 from all will carry us through this challenge.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in response to this global issue. We remain committed to keeping you safe. As Extendicare operates under protocols established by Public Health Authorities, please reach out to your local office for further information on the procedures in place.

If you have any questions or concerns surrounding how Extendicare is handling the situation, please contact [communications@extendicare.com](mailto:communications@extendicare.com).

Sincerely,



Lyn Fabricius  
National Director, Infection Prevention and Control, Extendicare

### **Useful Resources on COVID-19**

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Travel Advice for Canadians](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Current Risk to Canadians](#)

[World Health Organization \(WHO\): How to Protect Yourself](#)

[World Health Organization \(WHO\): Myth Busters on COVID-19](#)