

Attention: Northwood LTC Employees

March 14, 2020

Northwood is activating our pandemic plan to prepare and respond to the recent Novel Coronavirus (COVID – 19). There are no identified cases of COVID – 19 in Nova Scotia to date, however there continues to be Influenza activity.

The following measures are being implemented:

- In compliance with DHW requirements, a **restriction** for LTC facilities has been imposed on visitors (family, community members and volunteers) who have recently travelled outside of Canada not to visit for 14 days after their return. Please advise family members, volunteers, and visitors of this restriction. If there are immediate family members requesting to visit a resident in palliative care please contact infection control.

All staff are now under this restriction as well. Any staff or volunteer who has travelled outside of the country may not return to work and must self isolate for 14 days from the day they return.

Working in a health care environment, we are aware of the risks associated with coming to work while experiencing active respiratory symptoms. The COVID – 19 virus is new and there is neither a vaccine nor medical treatment available to support at-risk groups such as the elderly. Knowledge and prevention are key to containment.

- **Heighten Respiratory Surveillance** (tracking symptoms) for residents has begun with daily reporting to Infection Control so that any trends are identified. It is essential for staff to report any resident respiratory symptoms to the Charge Nurse. For staff members who experience respiratory symptoms it is essential to report to Staff Health.

- **Increased Environmental Disinfection** has been implemented for all frequently touched areas. Housekeepers will be regularly disinfecting frequently touched areas throughout the facilities. If you use a shared work space, it is important to disinfect your station frequently especially between use with a general disinfectant. Virox or Clorox products are not required they could damage equipment. You can order disinfectant from Environmental Services or Materiel Management/Stores/Receiving.

• **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** Inventory (masks, gowns, eye shields) supplies are monitored daily and replenishment is ongoing. We have sufficient stock to respond to respiratory illnesses. Should an outbreak be identified we will work with Department of Health and Wellness to secure additional PPE if required. PPE is not required for tasks unrelated to direct client care.

PPE will not be provided during regular departmental deliveries. If respiratory symptoms are identified Infection Control will work with Materiel Management to ensure supplies are allocated. Facility Supervisors/Responsibility/Charge Nurses will have access to supplies if symptoms are identified after regular business hours.

• **PPE Training** as it is essential that PPE are put on and taken off correctly. An education session is available on the Hub and all staff are expected to complete the module. Reviewing proper hand hygiene technique is important for all staff as well.

• **Communication and Information:** will continue to be updated on the HUB regularly. Please download the app to your phone to access regular updates. Northwood will continue to be transparent with information and will work in collaboration with the Department of Health and Wellness and Public Health Services.

Daily provincial updates are available at:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

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