

July 15, 2021

Dear Operators,

Since COVID-19 vaccinations began in December, active outbreaks in long-term care and seniors' assisted living have significantly decreased, and the progress on BC's Immunization Plan has also meant less community transmission, hospitalizations, and mortality rates across the province.

We want to thank all operators and staff for the significant efforts you've given to keeping residents and their families safe and healthy. We're pleased to tell you that due to this progress, long term care facilities at Vancouver Coastal Health are now able to resume some regular activities, while making sure that all appropriate health and safety precautions are in place.

The Ministry of Health, in consultation with the Public Health Officer and health authorities, has determined that standard processes and policies for admissions, inter-facility transfers, in-facility respite, and temporary absences may now resume, with appropriate precautions as required, including:

- Resume long-term care waitlist management as per the Long-Term Care Access Policy for publicly funded long-term care beds (i.e., if an individual declines an offer to a preferred care come, their place on the waitlist is not maintained).
- Resume standard process for inter-facility transfers, with precautions based on vaccination status (i.e., clients not fully vaccinated will be required to isolate for 14- days).
 - We can confirm that 14 day isolation is required for *all* unvaccinated admissions to LTC including from acute care, other long-term care facilities, assisted living residences or the community. This includes short stay residents and individuals admitted for in-facility respite.
- Resume all in-facility respite services, with precautions based on vaccination status (i.e., clients not fully vaccinated will be required to isolate for 14-days).
- Reinstigate standard long-term care Temporary Absence Policy of 30-days per calendar year, with precautions upon return based on vaccination status (i.e., clients not fully vaccinated will be required to isolate for 14-days).
- Resume all adult day programs including those that share space, staff and/or equipment with a long-term care home or assisted living residence. To support the ongoing safety of clients, residents, and staff the following will be required:
 - The opening of each Adult Day Program (ADP) site will continue to be dependent on a Regional Medical Health Officer (MHO) (or delegate) approved operating plan.

- o Require all ADP clients to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination, with exception by MHO approval only and with appropriate infection prevention and control precautions in place (i.e., for clients who have a medical reason to not receive vaccination and who can wear a mask)
- o In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in an adjoining home or residence, adult day programs will be suspended.
- o Recognizing a period of transition may be needed to achieve opening of all ADP sites, health authorities are asked to target opening of all sites by September 2021.

These COVID-19 response actions are intended to recognize the increased level of protection provided by COVID-19 vaccination and to mitigate the ongoing client, family and system impacts of restrictions. Enhanced cleaning, screening, and reporting requirements continue as per the [Infection Prevention and Control Requirements for COVID-19 in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#).

The Medical Health Officer retains the ability to implement additional protective measures (i.e., requirement for 14-day isolation) within a specific health authority or facility if regionally indicated. During an active outbreak, processes related to admissions (including in-facility respite) and inter-facility transfers will be in alignment with the COVID-19: [Outbreak Management Protocol for Acute Care, Long-Term Care, and Seniors' Assisted Living](#). Adult day program(s) will be suspended in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in an adjoining home or residence.

Thank you again for all your hard work to manage the delivery of home & community care services during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Jo-Ann Tait

Executive Director, Regional Long-Term Care, Assisted Living, Supported Housing
Vancouver Coastal Health

Dr. Michael Schwandt

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Vancouver Coastal Health

