

**DIRECTIVE #1 OF THE MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER**  
**COVID-19 PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES ORDER**  
**DATED MAY 18, 2020**

**TO:** All owners, licensees, Directors of Facility and Directors of Care of Licensed Long-Term Care Facilities (“LTCFs”) (such persons referred to collectively as “LTCF Operators”)

**TO:** All employed and contracted staff, and volunteers at Licensed Long-term Care Facilities

**FACILITIES:** All LTCFs within the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (“VCH”) Region

**I HEREBY ISSUE THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIVE FURTHER TO MY COVID-19 PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES ORDER DATED MAY 15, 2020 (“PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES ORDER”), AND PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 30, 31, 32, 39(3) AND 54(1) OF THE *PUBLIC HEALTH ACT*:**

All words and phrases which are defined terms in the Prevention and Control in Long Term Care Facilities Order have the same respective meaning in this Directive unless otherwise stipulated herein.

**LTCF OPERATORS MUST**

**1. Enhanced Cleaning**

1.1 Carry out enhanced cleaning of facilities and general infection control measures, in accordance with the guidance document issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control (“BCCDC Guidance Document”) which may be updated at any time, and in accordance with any additional direction or directive which may be provided by a VCH MHO. This BCCDC Guidance Document can be accessed on the BCCDC website at the following link: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/long-term-care-facilities-assisted-living>.

**1. Staff, Volunteer, & Visiting Health Professional Screening**

1.1. Conduct daily staff and volunteer screening, for volunteers who are physically present at the facility, in accordance with the Staff and Visiting Professionals Assessment Form available at <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>.

1.2. Ensure that Staff or volunteers who are newly hired or have been absent from the facility for 14 days or more, complete the COVID-19 Enhanced Staff Screening Questionnaire available at <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19> (the “Enhanced Staff Screening Questionnaire”);

1.2.1. Ensure that the staff member or volunteer completes the Enhanced Staff Screening Questionnaire 72 hours prior to their first planned shift and must ensure that the staff member send the completed form to the manager or Director of Care (“DOC”) of the facility a minimum of 48 hours prior to the member’s first planned shift;

1.2.2. The manager or DOC of the LTCF (“Manager or DOC”) must take the following steps: (1) ensure the Questionnaire is completely filled out (2) according to the responses on the questionnaire, ensure that all actions indicated by the Questionnaire are completed prior to allowing the staff member to enter the facility, (3) ensure that the Questionnaire is submitted to a VCH MHO, as directed on the Questionnaire, a minimum of 24 hours prior to the staff person’s or volunteer’s first scheduled shift.

1.3. The manager or DOC must ensure that visiting health professionals, including physicians, dentists, podiatrists and others, including students visiting the facility, are screened in accordance with the Staff and Visiting Professionals Assessment Form, as described in 2.1;

## **2. Screening Residents and Reporting Illness**

- 1.1. Screen residents daily for symptoms of COVID-19 including respiratory and Gastrointestinal symptoms
- 1.2. Immediately place any resident with new or worsening respiratory symptoms (including fever) on contact and droplet precautions.
- 1.3. Collect a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for COVID-19 NAT testing on any resident with new or worsening symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (including fever). An NP swab should be collected and sent for COVID-19 testing, even if just a single resident is ill.
- 1.4. Report to a VCH MHO immediately where one (1) incidence of an Influenza-Like Illness (“ILI”) or two (2) cases of cold-like symptoms are identified in residents or staff at the LTCF. Reports must be given in the form of a line list similar to those found in Appendix E and Appendix F of the BCCDC Guidance Document. This document is available at the following link: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/long-term-care-facilities-assisted-living>. Line lists must be submitted to Public Health via fax to 604-731-2756. There is no requirement for the LTCF to contact a Medical Health Officer unless the LTCF is seeking specific direction or it has specific concerns it wishes to discuss.

## **3. Visitor Policy and Screening**

- 1.1. Comply with the LTCF COVID-19 Visitor Policy (“Visitor Policy”) posted on the VCH website at <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>.
- 1.2. In exceptional circumstances, where resident well-being is significantly impacted, facilities may apply for a compassionate exemption issued by a VCH MHO, as set out in section 8 of this Directive.
- 1.3. Screen all visitors in accordance with the LTCF COVID-19 Visitor Assessment posted on the VCH website at: <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>.
- 1.4. The Visitor Policy will be subject to change by a VCH MHO as the level of transmission in the community changes and the risk to residents changes.

## **4. Transfers**

- 1.1. A LTCF that is not experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 (“Outbreak Free LTCF”) may transfer patients to another Outbreak Free LTCF.
- 1.2. An Outbreak Free LTCF may transfer patients to hospital. There is no need to notify a VCH MHO of these transfers.
- 1.3. Restrictions on transfers from Outbreak Free LTCFs to hospital and between Outbreak Free LTCFs may become necessary if transmission of COVID-19 increases in the VCH region.

## **5. Group Social Activities**

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- 1.1. Cancel or indefinitely postpone all group social activities within the LTCF and any planned community social activities unless the LTCF can maintain a two (2) meter separation between residents during these activities.

## **2. Restrictions for Facilities Experiencing an Outbreak**

- 2.1. Staff working in an Outbreak LTCF may not work in any other healthcare facility until the outbreak is declared over by a VCH MHO.
- 2.2. Any facility where an outbreak has been declared by a VCH MHO ("Outbreak LTCF"), must refrain from accepting any new admissions.
- 2.3. Any Outbreak LTCF must refrain from transferring a resident to another LTCF.
- 2.4. Any Outbreak LTCF must notify a VCH MHO prior to transferring a patient to any hospital as defined in the *Hospital Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 200. The exception is that in urgent or emergent situations, a resident may be transferred to an acute care hospital and a VCH Medical Health Officer should be notified by the Outbreak LTCF as soon as practically possible.
- 2.5. Ensure that all residents who have been temporarily removed from the Outbreak LTCF to live elsewhere in the community (e.g. with family members) are not permitted to return to the Outbreak LTCF until the outbreak is declared over by a VCH MHO. The LTCF must inform family members seeking to temporarily re-home residents of this prohibition on returning to the Outbreak LTCF, and discuss the care plan for the resident prior to the resident's removal from the Outbreak LTCF.;

## **8. Exemptions**

- 1.1. With respect to sections 2 through 7 of this Directive, in exceptional circumstances and where an appropriate safety plan is in place to manage health hazard risks, a VCH MHO may grant an exemption to these aspects of this Directive. LTCF Operators must apply for the exemption by contacting the VCH Licensing Officer listed below and setting out the exceptional circumstances in writing.

Nader Massoud, Senior Licensing Officer (Residential)

Email: [nader.massoud@vch.ca](mailto:nader.massoud@vch.ca)

Phone: 604-675-3859

## **9. Delivery of Directive**

- 9.1 Deliver this Directive and the *COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Long Term Care Facilities Order* to all staff and contractors about to commence work, or working, at the facility, and all volunteers about to commence volunteering, or currently volunteering, at the facility.

## **EMPLOYED AND CONTRACTED STAFF MUST**

### **1. Staff Screening**

- 1.1. Fully complete the Enhanced Staff Screening Questionnaire to the best of their knowledge and otherwise fully cooperate with all screening and assessments the LTCF is required to perform under this Directive.

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## **VOLUNTEERS MUST**

### **1. Volunteer Screening**

1.1. Fully complete the Enhanced Staff Screening Questionnaire to the best of their knowledge and otherwise fully cooperate with all screening and assessments the LTCF is required to perform under this Directive.

#### **DEFINITIONS IN THIS DIRECTIVE**

The definition of "healthcare facility" in this Directive includes the following:

- a) Any acute care facility;
- b) Any LTCF licensed under either the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* or the *Hospital Act*;
- c) Any hospice as licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*;
- d) Any outpatient care facility; and
- e) Any other facility as directed by a VCH MHO.

The definition of "Staff" in this Directive includes all employees, and contractors who are routinely physically present at the LTCF, except for any other professions, occupations, or care teams which have been exempted by a VCH MHO through a VCH MHO directive, or otherwise exempted by a VCH MHO.


#### **TERMS IN THIS DIRECTIVE**

The terms of this Directive are in addition to, and not in replacement of the BCCDC Guidance Document. Where, however, there is a conflict or inconsistency between this Directive and the BCCDC Guidance Document, the terms of this Directive shall take precedence.

The terms of this Directive remain in effect until cancelled, suspended or varied by me or another VCH MHO.

DATED THIS: 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

SIGNED:

  
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Althea Hayden, MD, MPH, FRCPC  
Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health  
800-601 W Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.  
Telephone: 604-675-3900 and Fax: 604-731-2756

DELIVERED by posting to the VCH website and by email to all Operators. Operators to deliver to all staff and volunteers.

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