

March 13, 2020

Dear Family Member:

This letter is to inform families that Community Living Durham North has a Pandemic Preparedness Plan and the purpose of the plan is to prevent illness and the spread of infection during a pandemic outbreak to the people we support and employees. Currently, the World Health Organization has announced that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be characterized as a pandemic. There is a dedicated webpage: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus> which issues updates on the virus twice daily to keep citizens up to date on developments. Community Living Durham North continues to monitor these updates and other reliable pandemic resources daily.

Agency-wide communications with our staff began today. Our first message to staff goes into some areas not normally explored with families, but we've decided in the interest of speed, and full and transparent communication, to attach it here in its entirety.

It will inform you in some detail about decisions we've taken about your family member's travel options and about how we're trying to protect them from infection by staff or visitors who may have been out of the country recently.

It also raises the important distinction between essential and not so essential services. We are not there yet, but Respite and Day Program users need to know these programs could face closure at some future point if the pandemic continues to worsen. And, as of today, foreign travel will mean that your family member cannot access these programs for 14 days after their return.

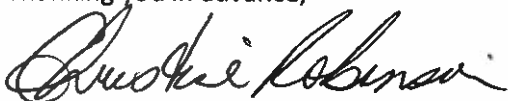
Managers are even now attempting to contact families that use our respite and day program services to find out about recent trips you may have taken and about your proposed travel plans. If you have not yet heard from them, it would certainly be appreciated if you would reach out to us.

In addition, we ask that people stay home and not attend the Community Support Programs, Youth Group and/or Respite if they show symptoms of being ill, until such time that they have recovered.

We will continue to keep you informed of any updates and/or situations that you and your family member need to be aware of.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Thanking you in advance,



Christine Robinson

Director of Community Supports

Hello everyone

Here is the first of probably quite a few all-points bulletins concerning Community Living Durham North's response to the pandemic.

Effective immediately, supported people are not to undertake travel that requires the assistance of CLDN staff, outside of the Durham Region/Lindsay areas.

This restriction does not apply to supported people who travel independently or with family and friends. There will also be necessary exceptions made; e.g. for doctor appointments or surgeries.

Effective immediately, no supported person can travel out of the country with staff assistance.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer said today to event managers who have gatherings of over 1,000 people, that he "would prefer that you did not hold those events... If you have gatherings of between 250 and 1,000... consult with your local public health." By implication, he is telling event organizers and the people who attend such events, that at this stage in the course of the pandemic it is reasonable to attend events that do not exceed 250 people.

Even within the Durham Region/Lindsay areas, supported people cannot attend events, accompanied by paid CLDN staff, that are likely to exceed 250 people.

CLDN has established a virtual command centre that is in fact an email address, "Covid19 Command Post," and it will get your subsequent message to all directors, managers and to Jenna Irons (our Pandemic Plan officer).

If you expect to accompany a supported person to a doctor appointment or surgery in Toronto or beyond, use this email address to notify and gain clearance. If you think it is appropriate to extend the border of the Lindsay area because you are traveling away from and not toward population centres, use "Covid19 Command Post" to request clearance.

If the person you support has a compromised immune system or some underlying condition that puts him or her at significant risk, then travel throughout even the Durham Region/Lindsay areas, even to events of fewer than 250 people, may be ill-advised.

If you have a related question about the advisability of a particular outing, or about a particular person's underlying conditions, send it to "Covid19 Command Post."

Do not exchange messages "agency-wide" about the pandemic or make program-specific decisions contrary to anything presented above. If you have learned something via Facebook or the Web that you think people should know, advise "Covid19 Command Post."

If you like, you can ask us to share the information agency wide. We will do so if we think it advances the cause. If we think the information is questionable or contrary to what we're hearing from the leading experts, we will not share it.

Travel undertaken by CLDN staff in their personal lives raises a different set of considerations.

As of today, the federal government is asking all travellers arriving in Canada to self-isolate for 14 days as a precaution. That is a message to employers as much as to foreign travellers. It has become a best practice not to permit foreign travellers into the workplace until they have self-isolated.

For employees who are out of the country as this message is being written, CLDN will construe your period of isolation as illness and the sick benefits, if any, described in your collective agreement will apply. If you leave the country after the date of this email communique, CLDN will not construe this isolation as a period of illness, because it is not, and you will not be paid.

Our response will be different in the event you actually contract coronavirus, or come down with a cold that has similar symptoms. If you are full time this will obviously qualify you for paid sick leave as per the FT CBA.

The Part Time collective agreement does not entitle staff to paid sick leave. However, in the midst of a pandemic we do not want sick people reporting to work because of economic necessity.

Therefore, if a part time employee develops Covid19-like symptoms which cause him or her to contact Public Health for a screening, you should not come to work and you can expect to be compensated.

The testing will lead to one of two results. If the test is negative and you have a cold, your period of eligibility, which began with your call to Public Health, will cease. If you have the virus, your pay will continue until you recover and are able to attend work.

However, sick leave payments to part time employees are complicated. Some work a lot of hours and some do not. We are developing a calculation whereby someone who has averaged 70-80 hours over the previous 3-6 pay periods will be paid as though they were full time. Someone who has averaged only one day per week will be paid accordingly.

EI has also stepped into the breach in ways that are not yet 100% clear to us. Our money comes from the Ontario taxpayer and we have a responsibility to use it prudently; in this context to not pay people who have already been compensated by EI. It may be that the pro-rated payments described above are pro-rated again, with us topping up the EI payment so no loss of pay is experienced.

We will clarify this matter of Part Time paid sick leave next week.

On a different topic, some staff have asked us about the scenario in which they have to self isolate in their place of work. Easy: this won't happen. If you feel ill, you leave work and you don't return until you are well again.

Certain programs that we operate are more at risk than others. Our Respite and Day Program operations serve people who live most of their lives away from CLDN and may have travelled or done all kinds of things since their last visit.

For this reason, we have begun as of now to make contact with people/families who intend to use these programs over the next few weeks. Today's announcement about foreign travellers applies to them also. If they are currently out of country, or determined to travel out of country soon, they will not be allowed to access our programs until after a 14 day period of isolation.

Reverting to today's message from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer, if it is still reasonable for people to attend an event where no more than 250 strangers are gathered, it is still completely reasonable for CLDN to continue to provide service to the people who use Respite and Day Program facilities.

But the pandemic is expected to get worse; we don't yet know how long it will last or quite how bad it might get.

Contingency planning has begun. Our Respite and Day Programs are highly valued by the people who use them, but they are not essential services in the way our group homes are essential. Some of the people we support residentially have no family and no guardian; we have a powerful duty of care towards them.

If it becomes necessary, we will close our Uxbridge Respite program. This will free up a group of employees, should staff shortages become serious. The home could also be used by a group home resident for self isolation purposes should that become necessary.

Further emergency measures, should the situation continue to escalate, would be the closure of our Port Perry Respite program and then of either or both of our Day Programs.

If we get to the point that a supported person is isolated and recovering from the Covid-19 virus, or from an illness that looks like it could be the virus, he or she will not be able to self isolate in quite the way that term is normally meant. He or she will need to be supported.

Staff will be expected to work with infected people assuming that CLDN is able to provide them with the PPE and with the other supports that they require in order to do so safely.

Many of these PPE are in your programs now and more are being ordered as we speak. It is the responsibility of each location's Health & Safety rep to check the pandemic bag and verify quantities on a monthly basis. **Given the state of things, Team Leaders must now check these bags as soon as possible and then ensure that weekly checks are performed until further notice.**

There is one location where PPE are now in use when one person is given his medications. If a similar necessity emerges elsewhere, PPE will be used there as well. However, **staff are absolutely prohibited from using masks or other PPE as a matter of choice; the way we see people in places like Tokyo wearing masks on a good day.**

Finally, we are putting in place some precautions regarding visitors to our programs and admin locations. Attached is a Visitor Screening form. Effective immediately, staff are required to meet visitors at the door (e.g. families, contractors, placement students, taxi drivers) and ask each one of the questions on the form. It is self-explanatory. Visitors will be admitted or asked to delay their visit based on their responses to your questions. If any problems are encountered during this interchange, contact "Covid19 Command Post."

You can expect further communications from us next week. Have a safe and enjoyable weekend. Be sure to reach out if you have questions.

Glenn

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