

October 19, 2021

AR 193514

All Licensed Supportive Living, Long-term Care and Hospice Residents and Families

RE: Temporary Public Health Measures & Congregate Care Settings

Dear Residents and Families:

Access to support and companionship from family and friends continues to be supported as **essential** to the maintenance of resident mental and physical health and wellbeing. As residents' risk tolerance varies across these settings, proof of vaccination for families and friends will not be a provincially mandated requirement. I am however implementing some increased required measures as noted below. In addition, operators have authority¹ to implement additional site-based policies and processes for COVID-19 prevention (including requiring proof of vaccine or rapid testing) as appropriate to local context and consideration of resident preferences. Once the site-based policies and processes have been developed, they will apply to all persons entering the site.

As always, I strongly recommend and encourage that all Albertans, and especially the family and friends of residents in these settings, be fully immunized against COVID-19. This is the most important thing you can do to protect not only yourself but also residents and staff. In addition to being fully immunized, wearing a mask continuously while indoors and in resident rooms (unless a significant communication barrier is present) and staying home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (even if mild and even if you are fully vaccinated) are critical.

If you are not fully immunized please reconsider your need to visit the resident onsite, indoors and in-person before entering the site. Those who are not fully immunized are at significantly higher risk to transmit COVID-19 to people living and working in the setting. Alternatives to onsite indoor in-person visits include, outdoor visits, virtual visits, and telephone calls.

The current public health measures applicable to these settings are outlined in [CMOH Order 37-2021](#), including symptom screening, enhanced disinfecting and cleaning requirements and isolation when needed, continue to provide a high level of protection against COVID-19 outbreaks. As a result, we are seeing significantly smaller and more controlled outbreaks than previous waves of COVID-19.

¹ [Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act, Nursing Homes Act](#)

With the increased transmissibility of the delta variant we are facing in the fourth wave, I have issued additional temporary measures in [CMOH Order 49-2021](#), which requires:

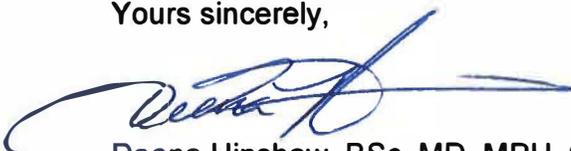
- Visiting persons in all settings to wear a mask continuously (i.e. not only in common areas) unless there is a significant communication barrier; and
- Long-term care and designated supportive living residents be tested for COVID-19 within 48 hours of hospital discharge (for new admissions from hospital and returns from hospital stays longer than 24 hours).
 - Residents must remain in their room and be placed on contact/droplet precautions in the facility until the negative test result is received.
 - This is not required for residents in other licensed supportive living setting (e.g. lodges) or hospices although some operators may implement rapid testing or other measures in these settings as an additional site-based policy and process.

Operators are required to comply with all mandatory and temporary CMOH orders. As well, some operators may implement additional site-based policies and processes for COVID-19 prevention (such as requiring proof of vaccine or rapid testing). Residents, families and friends must follow all mandatory orders and any additional site-based COVID-19 policies and processes implemented by the operator. In addition, I ask that all of you continue to remain vigilant in protecting yourselves from COVID exposure both on and offsite to lower the risk to the vulnerable members of our communities.

If you are not fully immunized, I encourage you to access accurate, science-based information to make an informed decision. Please see the [Alberta COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#) webpage for reliable information.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to your loved ones and your communities. We remain in this together.

Yours sincerely,



Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachment

cc: Evan Romanow, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Service Delivery, Alberta Health

Trish Merrithew-Mercredi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health and Compliance, Alberta Health

David O'Brien, Senior Program Officer, Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care, Alberta Health Services