

May 21, 2020

Attention: Support Services to Seniors

Positive confirmed cases of COVID-19 have now been identified in Manitoba. Public Health Officials, health system leaders, facilities, providers and staff are taking all necessary steps to decrease the risk of spread of the virus.

Across Manitoba, strict infection prevention and control precautions are now in place in all health care settings, including long term care facilities.

For the safety of those populations that may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, and upon the recommendation of public health officials, we are asking that all grant-funded organizations and programming take all necessary steps to **ensure compliance** with the recommendations of **social distancing, appropriate screening and restrictions on social gatherings of more than 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors**.

Support Services to Seniors Programs focused on providing congregate meals should be discontinued. Alternative ways to deliver meals to vulnerable seniors must be put into place. Each program is encouraged to work with their local Regional Health Authority on potential alternatives.

While the benefits of seniors' programming are significant, it is important in the weeks ahead for all activities to ensure strict infection prevention and control measures.

Across Manitoba, long-term and acute care facilities have implemented elevated precautions to protect residents, clients and patients, many of whom have underlying medical conditions that put them at greatest risk of becoming severely ill due to COVID-19.

We encourage your Board to consider similar measures, including:

- Restricting access to those clients and worker who have returned from travel (including travel within Canada) in the last 14 days.
- Restricting access to those clients and workers who have had exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19; (Note: *Exposure may include scenarios like: large events or settings with confirmed case(s) of COVID-19).
- Restricting access to those clients and workers who have been directed to self-monitor or self-isolate for 14 days.
- Restricting access to those clients and workers who have any of the following cold/flu symptoms:
 - Cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, weakness and/or headache

Additionally, public health officials are recommending adherence to social distancing strategies, which intentionally reduce close contact between people. These should be considered along with infection prevention and control strategies to stop the progression of community transmission of the virus. This means:

- Cancelling or postponing any social gatherings of more than 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors

- Minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two metres) contact between other individuals in public;
- Avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes;
- Disinfecting frequently used surfaces; and
- Following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus.

We appreciate your understanding as we all work together to protect the health of our clients, patients, staff and community. We encourage you to keep up to date with the latest information at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19> and to contact your Regional Health Authority contact if you have any questions about the measures you can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.