

December 18, 2020

AR 181454

**RE: Enhanced Public Health Measures & Congregate Care Settings**

To all licenced supportive living, long-term care and hospice residents:

Since my last letter dated November 20, 2020, additional measures have been introduced for all Albertans to address the rapidly rising case numbers of COVID-19 in the province and the increasing strain on our healthcare system.

I am writing to you again to reinforce the expectations of you as a resident or client in supportive living, long-term care or hospice. The new restrictions announced on December 8, 2020, will impact how you live your life both on site and off site, as well as the off site services or activities that you engage in. These restrictions will be in place at least until January 11 and will be reassessed at that time.

Now more than ever, I want to encourage you to continue to stay on site except in the case of necessity, which varies from resident to resident. The choices you make impact not just you, but also your neighbours and the staff who care for you and your neighbours. Depending on the risk of the activity that you engage in off site (e.g. overnight stay with your designated family/support person, if this is part of your regular care activity and/or care plan; retail shopping) the operator of your building may require you to take necessary safety measures upon your return, which may include masking in common areas for 14 days or quarantine away from common areas for 14 days.

The new restrictions are intended to limit the activity of all Albertans, including yourselves. If you leave your site, please take all necessary precautions and opt for curbside pick up (if not delivery) over in-store purchases. As all indoor and outdoor social gathering is prohibited, I encourage you to connect with your friends and family virtually and over the phone. Your designated family/support persons will still be able to assist you in your room or in a shared care area. Please speak with your operator for more information. I am asking all designated family/support persons to limit their presence on site whenever possible. While they can be on site to maintain your mental and physical health and wellbeing, I've asked them to find other ways to meet those needs without coming to the site, to the greatest extent possible.

These restrictions are especially difficult to bear as we head into a season of shared celebration. I want to be clear that you may continue to connect with fellow residents on site unless you are required to quarantine or isolate. Having said that, I ask that you

consider the number of contacts you have and limit them when possible, like all other Albertans. Phone calls between neighbours are a simple and effective pick-me-up in this difficult time we are all experiencing together.

Some services offered on site will no longer be able to operate fully (e.g. amenities accessible to the public, hair salons and other personal wellness services) but your health and accommodation services (e.g. laundry, housekeeping, meals, personal care such as hair washing, and recreation activities) will all continue uninterrupted.

Operators and staff continue to go above and beyond to ensure your comfort and wellbeing and that of those around you; please extend kindness, understanding and patience to them. If you have any questions or concerns about what has changed and what hasn't, please ask your site administrator for information.

Please understand that these measures are necessary to protect each other at this critical time. It is critical that you remain vigilant in your actions to protect yourself and those around you. As the situation is rapidly evolving, you can find the most up to date information here [www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx).

If the ongoing restrictions are causing you distress, please reach out to your site contact. Staff and operators are committed to your wellbeing and are best equipped to offer immediate support. They can also explore options that may be available to you. Thank you for continuing to prioritize public health advice to protect your safety, and the safety of those around you. We remain in this together.

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Yours sincerely,



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Chief Medical Officer of Health

cc: John Cabral, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Service Delivery, Alberta Health  
Trish Merrithew-Mercredi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health and Compliance, Alberta Health