



# *North Peace Housing Foundation*

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Dear Residents and Family Members,

I'd like to start by letting you know that every decision we make, and everything we are doing at the present time, is intended to keep our residents, your family members, and our staff as protected as they can be in light of this global challenge.

As stated by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, "Older Albertans are at an increased risk of having complications if they were to get COVID-19," and we, at the North Peace Housing Foundation (NPHF), are taking steps we feel are necessary to fulfil our responsibility.

As you are aware, on March 15, 2020, we made the very difficult decision to restrict all visitation to our Lodges and Senior Self-Contained Apartments until further notice. While understanding the increased stress and loneliness this may cause, we believe that physical health is our primary goal.

At this time, we would like to advise our residents and families of the steps we are taking to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

Since March 13, 2020 we have advised our employees that anyone returning from outside Canada, and all employees who have anyone in their residence or household returning from outside Canada, must self-isolate for 14 days after the return and notify their Manager prior to returning to work. Staff that are experiencing symptoms are to call 811 and proceed with testing for the virus and immediately notify their manager of the results.

All employees who are travelling must notify their Manager of their travel plans prior to leaving. **We are strongly advising that ALL unnecessary travel stop immediately.** This includes travel to larger centres within the province for shopping or visiting family for example, as it is not worth the risk.

All Managers and staff are to cancel any meetings, conferences, training, etc. that have been planned until further notice. Each lodge will respect working areas of sensitive cross contamination and indirect access to another area, such as kitchens, will not be permitted. All doors and access points are to remain locked to external entry with main access through front door, unless it is for loading/unloading purposes. No staff are to attend lodges unless attending a shift of work. No Administration, Finance or unassigned Maintenance workers are permitted to visit any lodges, unless cleared to do so. All staff and Lodge Managers are to avoid visiting Central Office (any documents are to be scanned and emailed) unless necessary.

We all know that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is serious and has now spread around the world; however, we need to keep in mind that it is a contagious virus and we have a strong history of responding to contagious viruses and infections in our Lodges. From an operational perspective, we will respond to COVID-19 as we already do for things like influenza or other viruses. Our greatest challenge will be in working with emotions and ensuring we are all communicating the same message, *that we are continually monitoring the situation and the materials provided by Alberta Health Services and the World Health Organization, and that we are working in the interest and protecting the health of our residents and staff.*

**What NPHF is doing:**

- All our Lodges have stock of necessary masks, gowns, gloves and other supplies necessary to respond to infectious disease control. Inventory will be checked on a regular basis to ensure adequate supplies are always on hand.
- We remind all staff to follow proper handwashing techniques.
- Hand sanitizers are available at our facilities and we are ensuring that they remain full and ready to be used.
- We already have, and review annually our policies, procedures and training in techniques to prevent the spread of germs specific to individual roles in serving residents.
- We are focussing on keeping our common areas as clean and sanitized as possible, as well as increasing the frequency of sanitizing the common areas, handrails, doorknobs, elevator controls, public washrooms, etc.
- Restricting access for all unnecessary visitors/contractors/vendors, similar to an actual flu outbreak.
- Providing necessary signage to all locations.
- Providing, often on daily basis, updates and educational materials from Alberta Health Services.
- Continuing with essential services within all lodge locations.

If we do have a resident in self-isolation, they will be required to complete testing and will be encouraged to connect with families for ongoing assistance.

If confirmation of the virus occurs, we will take the steps required to start self-isolation education and any containment/disinfection requirements. Staff will treat this the same as any other outbreak within the Lodge and follow outbreak procedures that are already in place.

**Alberta Health recommendations for seniors**

To prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, among seniors and other vulnerable groups:

- Only essential visits to any continuing care or long-term care facility in Alberta are recommended.
- Individuals over 60 years of age and those with pre-existing health conditions are most at risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19.
- Families and friends of those in these facilities are asked to think of other ways besides visiting that they can support and encourage their loved ones through this difficult time.

**Social Distancing:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA explains it as ““remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance” whenever possible to limit the ability of the virus to spread.” In other words, keep your distance from other people, about 2 Metres or 6 Feet away, and avoid crowds.

**Hand Cleanliness:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

**For further information on (Covid-19) Coronavirus Preparedness in NPHF Lodges and Apartments:**

Please go to our website at <https://www.nphf.ca>.

**Other Sources of information:**

For Further Information from The Government of Alberta on the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) please go to:

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

For further information from Alberta Health Services please go to:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

For further information from the Government of Canada please go to:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

For further information from the World Health Organization please go to:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Signed By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tammy Menssa (Executive Director)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_