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As we settle into a new norm, there have been numerous inquiries regarding the guidelines and directives from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to ease restrictions within Long-Term Care and Retirement. These have clearly been baby steps and have been challenging for residents, families and loved ones to adhere to, after so many months of isolation. And yet, these guidelines are given in the spirit of continuing to keep LTC residents safe and homes COVID free. We all know the devastation of COVID spread in congregate living settings. Fairview Parkwood Communities has been incredibly blessed over the past 4 months.

We do want you to know that we are striving to do our best to balance the directions from the Ministry, and social distancing, along with the need to connect with loved ones and each other. When we make decisions, we need to remember the virus continues to circulate within the region, therefore while our decisions appear to be slow and perhaps overly cautious we want to ensure the safety of our entire community.

There are three protocols at the fore-front of our minds as we think about next steps. These are outdoor visits and testing for those anxious to connect with a loved one; for residents it is the dining experience.

We hope the information below clarifies some of the protocols.

Visits

Directive 3 from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is very clear regarding resident visits: residents may have one visitor at a time; the visitor must have a negative covid-19 test result within the past 14 days; pass active screening; and visitors are required to wear a mask for the duration of the visit.

Wearing a mask is difficult, especially if your family member is hard of hearing and yet we know masks have kept us safe. If you are unsure of proper mask protocol or whether your mask meets the requirements, please ask us. We are happy to provide you with a mask.

Appointment times are available on the website and can be booked online. Appointments allow the staff to be prepared for the visit, making the overall experience more pleasant for both the resident and the visitor.

If you are not comfortable with an in-person visit, please advise. Virtual options continue to be available, as well as telephone calls.

Testing

There are many conversations regarding testing, visitors are advocating to have this requirement removed. There are groups that have advocated to the Ministry of Health for this change. At this time, I do not have an update, other than to let you know it is being considered in the context of safety.

For now, it is a process we must all adhere to. Our team members are also tired of being tested repeatedly, and yet we know and understand this is one of the safety measures our Government has put in place. For now, we respect this direction and will let you know when it changes.

Dining

We recognize the importance of the dining experience for residents from a mental, social and physical function perspective. This is often the best part of the Resident's day. Dining practices were altered early in the pandemic to respect the rules of social distancing. Our teams are exploring options to bring residents together for meals, understanding the need for great caution.

We ask for your patience as we work through this protocol.

The transition to 'close' long term care and retirement as per the Ministry Directives was swift. We continue to follow the Directives while learning to appreciate the consideration required to balance resident safety and easing restrictions.

As your CEO, I am not an expert, there are still so many unknowns as we adjust to a new norm. Yet what I have observed is that since the mask was introduced in LTC and RH the spread of outbreak has greatly reduced; handwashing and social distancing work. I ask for your patience as we adhere to Ministry Directives, adjust our protocols and staffing and find a way to provide the interaction our residents need.

Thank you for your understanding and respect of our team members as we all work together to stay safe.

With kindness,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EShantz'.

Elaine Shantz, CEO