



Symphony Senior Living
In concert with your life

April 28, 2020

Update on items for Residents, Families and Team Members

Hi All,

Good news continues as we remain Covid free in all our homes. No staff or resident cases. Thanks again for everyone's ongoing diligence. I know this has been a long haul, but it is paying off! This week brings us some good news on new government help and we need to start thinking and planning for the eventual opening up of restrictions as I know this will be in the media a lot this week. We do not have any immediate plans for opening to visitors or lessening restrictions and this is due to the fact that seniors are the most vulnerable population for this virus and the peak has not yet been reached in Ontario. That said below, we will share some thoughts about what that might look like.

Pandemic Pay:

The Ontario government announced a new \$4/hour premium pay for all staff that are involved in care and support services. This is in addition to our Above and Beyond bonus which equates to \$3.33 an hour. The government covid pay, will go forward for 16 weeks and our bonus was due to expire soon, so it is good timing. The team will get both premiums/bonus for part of the time and I know that will be welcome help for those that have chosen one workplace over another. Most of our teams are now full-time hours, but for those that are not, it will help supplement not having a second job. We have not yet received all the details of the premium and expect more announcements this week; until then we are setting up the premium in our payroll system.

The exception to the premium pay is the management staff. Although they are now often frontline support and filling in with hands on care shifts, they do not qualify. We are looking at this now and will ensure our managers are compensated inline with the various incentive coming out.

PPE Supplies:

PPE supply continues to be monitored weekly and we are restocking as needed. We have spent just over \$25,000 on new PPE stock. This is a much higher amount than normally would be spent in any year. The government funding, we have received to assist with covid expenses, should cover most of this expense. We are placing another order to ensure we are adequately supplied on an ongoing basis and should we have an outbreak or need it in the fall.

Hospital and other admissions:

Hospital discharge/admissions policy has changed several times in the recent few weeks. Currently the Ministry of Health has approved admissions and readmissions to retirement homes. They are supporting a covid test prior to discharge. We have insisted the test results must be no more than 48 hours old. Testing results need to be received PRIOR to transfers back. Once admitted post hospital or from any other location a 14-room isolation will occur.

We have asked the government to consider testing for facility to facility (ie from another retirement home or LTC) and all new admissions. We believe this would go along way in reducing the spread of Covid in LTCs and Retirement Homes and allow residents to locate where they can get the services they need.

Thinking about the Future and "opening things up":

The Ontario government was expected to make announcements this week about reopening for business and schools. The announcements have been very vague and nothing concrete yet to work with.

It is our opinion that we were the "first to close" and should be the "last to open" as a general statement. This



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is due to the fact, that we service the highest risk group of anyone in healthcare/business (+70 yrs of age) and our residents are living in a current infection controlled, communal setting. We are hoping that over the next few weeks things will become a bit clearer and the cases in Ontario will continue to decrease, although today they went up again. At that time, we can begin planning for next steps with you.

Here are some thoughts that we are considering as guiding points, to when we start trying to go back to a more inclusive and open environment. We are very interested in your thoughts and opinions as this is really a group decision. Please reach out directly to your Executive Director or send me an email with your thoughts on priorities for any initial relaxing of restrictions etc.

Generally, we have considered the following points so far:

- We should be 2 weeks or more, behind, province's guidance on "opening up".
- Staff will continue to wear masks.
- Essential visitors will first include family or very close friends where family is not present – precautions will be taken; including visits in resident suite only, active screening of visitors and masks.
- Short bus trips out of the home: structured with our staff and social distanced from others if stop at a park.
- Coordinators/managers will continue to host 1/week activity; our resident specialists will be encouraged to share their talents and be provided extra time to do so as part of a new robust integrated activity calendar.
- When we get to the point of handling resident request to leave the home for visiting with family, friends or other events; we will initially ask for 7 days isolation on return and 14 if attended a large group gathering. We will request a mask is worn upon return in common areas. If any symptoms develop we will seek immediate testing.
- Items we don't see bringing back this year or not until testing is readily available, Antibody testing becomes available or a vaccine:
 - Outside entertainers or programs; no use of volunteers and large group gatherings involving public or family and friends.
 - Exceptions will be made for ministers/pastors/priests/OT/PT providers that adhere to screening and work only at our locations.
 - Staff we are asking to be one employer only and will provide more FT jobs for the remainder of the year and onward.

This is the beginning of our thoughts about the next steps, we are waiting for more guidance from the Government but also we would like to see a more coordinated effort at the ministry of health and hospitals on testing and a consistent drop in cases and outbreaks, before we comfortable opening up to even family at this point. Please feel free to send me an email with thoughts and suggestions on this as your feedback is important or for residents to discuss this with your Executive Director and they can share your comments with our group as we move forward.

Hopefully, you are all able to start enjoying the warmer weather. We are trying to get out in our backyards and patios much more right now to get some needed Vitamin D and sunshine. Stay safe and take care.

Lisa Brush
CEO
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