



Symphony Senior Living
In concert with your life

April 9, 2020

Hello Residents, Families and Team Members,

As of today, we remain COVID free in our buildings, but more and more hospitals and residences are going into outbreak. Our staff have been wonderful and careful about illnesses and contact with the outside world. Our residents have been positive and family supportive. A Happy Easter and Passover to all who celebrate, I know the teams have come up with something special at each home to celebrate in house. Personally, I told my family that the spirit of Christ and Mosses does not land on a certain date of the year, the Easter celebration and Passover, is about gratitude and compassion. We are moving our “Easter” to May when hopefully we can be together as a family and in the meantime we will be grateful for all we have and compassionate to those with less, or struggling.

Masks:

We now have the “OK” by the Federal Public Health to use homemade masks (finally) and we have sewers, working in all corners: volunteer families in Carleton Place, residents with sewing machine and material are joining in, my niece in Sarnia is making us some from donated material and even I ordered more material and elastic to start sewing! We plan to have enough on site for all staff and we will launder them daily. Residents don’t need to wear them as the risk we have is staff that leave the building and return. If you want to help the sewing effort or have some to donate, please reach out to your Executive Director.

In addition, today the Ontario Ministry of Health issued a guidance for all staff to wear a procedural mask. This would be great, except the stock of PPE around the world is in crisis. We have medical PPE orders coming in and that has been a major daily battle. For now, and until we receive large orders of masks, we will be providing staff with fabric masks as above and reserving the medical/disposable masks for outbreak. We will have enough should we end up in outbreak, but our goal is to stay out of outbreak!

Packages and exiting the building to see family:

We want to again STRESS to families please DO not bring goods to residents or ask them to exit the building to see you, even for a quick hug or pick up of a parcel. You are seriously putting others at risk when you do this. If there is something you really want your loved one to have that cannot wait, deliver it to the office and we will sanitize and hold for 24 hours.

Good news:

I know this has been already a month and it feels like no end in sight, but I do think we have light at the end of this tunnel....and it’s not a train 😊 Everyday new information is available, and tests are being developed. We hope to access an antibody kit in the next week, if we can, we plan to order enough for every staff member and resident. This would allow a quick 15 min blood prick



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test, that tells us if the person has COVID 19 antibodies in their system. If they do, then the likelihood of getting sick again or becoming contagious, is very low. This is most useful on our staff who are entering and exiting the building, but can also be useful for our residents. Stay tuned for more on this. We will need approval from you to test residents, if we can access these.

Something to consider very carefully, if you must go to Hospital:

I want to make sure everyone is aware of a very serious consideration. As you have heard the Hospitals are bracing for massive shortages of resources, many no longer allow any visitors, even in ER and ICU at end of life. The hospitals are limiting admissions and we must call in advance with the doctor's guidance, before sending anyone. Almost all Hospitals in the Ottawa area are now officially in Covid-19 Outbreak, the number rose sharply the last few days.

We want to ensure YOUR wishes are known to us and your care providers, please ensure we have your Advanced Directive and any DNR on file and current. We will make every attempt to reach you during any situation that could involve a transfer of your loved one to hospital, failing that we will take your written guidance, and/or guidance from the Doctor and/or Hospital based on symptoms.

I hate to even think of this, but given the current Hospital overload and looming crisis, we all need to think in advance about how we wish to deal with a hospital transfer situation if it happens. Even seemingly obvious admissions to ER for possible stroke, shortness of breath, high blood pressure should be carefully considered, given your individual situation and the risks of Covid 19 and the end of life situations that are unfolding in some hospitals.

Questions I would be asking the doctor and/or our wellness coordinator/ED prior to authorizing a send to hospital of my loved one:

- 1) What will be done in hospital given the situation that cannot be done in house?
- 2) What is the likelihood that an effective treatment is available in hospital, given your current health and condition?
- 3) Will quality of end of life (if that's the case) be improved or reduced if a transfer to hospital?
- 4) Can whatever is being suggested, be done in house with Doctor guidance?
- 5) Have we done all we can remotely, before a transfer to hospital?

Here is a scenario to consider: you/your loved one has a worsening health situation that normally you would be sent to hospital for -- option 1) you are sent to hospital for treatment - if the hospital is in Covid outbreak or you are sent to ICU, likely NO FAMILY will be allowed to visit – often not even on terminal situations or 2) if able stay at Symphony and palliate with us; we have access to all measures to provide palliative care comfort, family will be able to be with you until the end – we will ensure you have full PPE if the situation is Covid-19 and under strict guidance to limit cross contact.



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To prepare for a possible unexpected hospital transfer, we ask you consider you guidance and paperwork with us and talk to our Wellness Coordinator or Executive Director if concerned or want to modify or clarify any directive. We have increased our access and stock of Oxygen and Palliative kits., should we need to have quick access to comfort measures for any resident.

As of today, all Admissions and RE-admissions from Hospital **MUST** come with a Covid Negative test **even a quick trip to the ER**. We instituted this last week and today, it is also a Ministry of Health directive.

IF you become Covid positive in the hospital, even for an unrelated quick visit, you will be treated and isolated at hospital, with their protocols, rules and guidelines.

IF you become Covid positive in your home (Symphony), you will be treated and isolated in your suite or an isolation area (unless a hospitalization is required/recommended) and if the situation is end of life, family will still be able to see you with full PPE and precautions.

I really hate to think of all these worst-case scenarios, but better prepared than not. I feel like the CEO grinch these days as we must plan and re-plan on a daily basis for new threats or changes in everything from testing, to PPE to staffing needs. Your teams are working very hard and are trying to keep things fun and light at the homes, but also safe. We appreciate your support and positive attitude.

Please stay healthy and safe, enjoy the Easter/Passover holiday the best you can right now,

Sincerely,

Lisa Brush
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