

March 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Further COVID-19 Update from EAFWR to Families - March 16, 2020

Dear Families,

We are writing to provide you with a further update since our last communication at noon today about our response to COVID-19. At Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region, the health and safety of the people we serve, our families, staff and the wider community is our first priority and we value your well-being during this time of uncertainty.

During this afternoon's press conference, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greatly emphasized the importance of social distancing and how this practice will protect our health care system, ensuring that COVID does not overwhelm our community.

Given the increased concern around social distancing to prevent the spread of infection, we believe it is in everyone's best interests for Direct Support People **to suspend their work for a period of three weeks.**

However, we recognize that you and your Direct Support Person(s) may wish to continue to spend time together and **ask that you follow these recommendations** from Region of Waterloo Public Health:

Social Distancing

Practice social distancing as much as possible. Social distancing means maintaining distance from others (two arms' length or 2 metres).

Self-Assessment and Screening

As previously communicated, we request that you and your Direct Support Person(s) follow these screening guidelines for COVID-19 prior to meeting (should you choose to continue to spend time together):

Are you or a member of your household feeling unwell and experiencing the following symptoms:

- Fever, new cough, difficulty breathing, or a combination of these symptoms
- Muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose or diarrhea?
- Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?

- Does someone you are in close contact with have COVID-19 (for example, someone in your household or workplace)?
- Are you in close contact with a person who is sick with respiratory symptoms (for example, fever, cough or difficulty breathing) who recently travelled outside of Canada?

Please keep in mind that the majority of people likely to be carriers of COVID-19 (who do not display the symptoms of COVID-19) are aged 18-39 years old, which comprises the majority of our Direct Support People.

Protect yourself:


- Wash your hands often with warm water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into the bend of your arm, not your hand
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

We recognize and regret the impact that observing the social distancing will have on your family and loved ones. As an organization, we strongly believe in doing our part to contribute to the overall flattening of the curve, and feel we have no choice but to do what we can in order to minimize the spread of infection and protect our community.

For families who use private support providers, we recommend that you also use the screening questions and social distancing recommendations when arranging for private supports.

As this evolves we will share any further changes or actions with you. Thank you for your support as we navigate this situation.

Yours in community,



Allan Mills
Executive Director