

August 12, 2020

TO: All Staff, Medical Staff, Contracted Staff at Holy Family Long Term Care

**FROM: Dr. Patty Daly, Chief Medical Officer for VCH and PHC
Karin Olson, Chief Operating Officer, Vice President, Coastal, VCH
Dr. John Harding, Medical Health Officer, VCH**

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry’s daily release of information today included the following update on Holy Family’s outbreak:

Facility name	Type of facility	HA	Declared over	Total number of cases	Total number of deaths	Number of resident cases	Number of resident deaths	Number of staff/other cases	Number of staff deaths
Holy Family Hospital	Long term care facility	VCH	No	88	21	53	21	35	0

There are still a total of 53 residents and 35 staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 to date. Tragically, there has been one more resident death, bringing the total to 21. We send our deepest condolences to relatives and loved ones of the residents we’ve lost.

There is one Holy Family resident who remains in hospital (not in the ICU). The total number of residents cleared is 30 (we had reported 31 cleared in Monday’s update, which we have since revised); all 35 staff members that had tested positive have been cleared.

Today marks **19 straight days** without a resident testing positive for COVID-19. Our success to date is due to all of you doing your part.



Diligence and consistency of practice have been key to mitigating the spread of COVID. All staff have shown great commitment to learning from the various in-service education sessions. Regular Question and Answer sessions are held by IPAC physicians. We have had great turnout and it is so good to see staff engaged and asking questions.

Some of those common staff questions and concerns that come from these sessions have been summarized below by our IPAC team:

When will this outbreak of COVID-19 be called over?

- Two incubation periods (28 days) after the last resident COVID-19 case is considered non-infectious --> likely end of August if no one else becomes positive.
- Dr. John Harding (Medical Health Officer) and VCH Public Health will declare the conclusion of the outbreak

- In the meantime, **Outbreak precautions are still in place, so this is not the time to become complacent.**
- All IPAC measures remain in effect until the conclusion of the outbreak.

When the outbreak is over will we all be tested again?

- If there are no further cases, PCR testing by NP swab for all staff will likely not be indicated.
- In September 2020, there will be another opportunity to have serology testing performed.
- More information will be communicated about this at a later date.

Can I work at a different site once the outbreak is over?

- Yes, but you must choose a single site. The single site order is still in effect for private hospitals, stand-alone extended care hospitals, licensed long-term care, registered assisted living and provincial mental health facilities.
- The order does not apply to home support, acute care hospitals or extended care units physically located within acute care hospitals.
- Please connect with your HR or on-site manager or agency for direction.
- Those who continue to work at HFH LTC until after the outbreak is declared over (but not before) will be cleared to return to their home site, from an infection control perspective.

What will change after the outbreak?

- Shared activities will likely change (e.g. bingo, puzzles, cooking, etc.).
- Physical distancing, where possible, will be required.
- Hand hygiene will be maintained.
- Many changes in the environment will be maintained.
- A transition plan is actively being worked upon.

Could there be a second outbreak at HFH LTC sometime in the future?

- Not all residents are immune, so a second COVID-19 outbreak remains a possibility at any time.
- The risk of another outbreak is lower due to the interventions in place, and many of these changes will be in effect for an extended period of time; likely for the duration of the pandemic. Many changes to environment and new practices, which will decrease the risk
- **If you feel even the slightest of symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please refrain from coming to work, go and get tested, and then self-isolate at home until you get your results.**
- And if you notice symptoms at work, to notify your supervisor, get tested and go home
- Look after yourself, both your physical and mental health; stay healthy

Can recovered/cleared staff pass it on?

- Recovered/cleared staff are considered non-infectious and cannot transmit the virus.
- Each health care worker is reviewed by VCH Public Health before being allowed to return to work.

What are some residual symptoms after COVID-19 recovery? Can sick leave be extended?

- Some staff may have post-infectious symptoms, such as cough and fatigue
- Residual symptoms do not imply that a person can transmit virus.
- For issues relating to long-term disability, please contact your supervisor, Occupational Health, and PHC Human Resources

Why is physical distancing important?

- It's an intervention just like personal protective equipment, testing, hand hygiene, etc.
- Maintain good physical distance from co-workers and others while at HFH and in the community
- Please avoid touching mouth, eyes, nose/ mucus membranes even when not at work

Why should we start resident bathing before the outbreak is declared over?

- While residents are currently receiving personal care at the bedside, Holy Family residents have not had a shower or a bath since early June 2020.
- A safe process for bathing of residents is being developed and trialed, and will include significant staff input.
- Only cleared residents will be eligible for showering/bathing, and only one resident per day (maximum).

Have cell phones been swabbed?

- Cell phones are considered a commonly touched surface.
- Please use disinfectant wipes to disinfectant your cell phones.
- The virus is very susceptible to disinfectants and the alcohol used in hand rub.
- This is especially important before meals when staff often use their mobile devices.

Profiling Holy Family Staff

Holy Family Long Term Care staff, medical staff and contracted services staff are fully committed and engaged in addressing the outbreak, while continuing to provide exceptional and compassionate care to residents. You have been the heroes of this unfortunate and tragic outbreak and we celebrate and recognize your daily contributions.

What is your name and your current role?

Elvira Santiago, HFH LTC Rehab Assistant

What was the hardest or most challenging for you during the outbreak?

The physical distancing and not being able to hold our usual programs. We usually have a lot of physical contact with the residents so it was very hard to not be able to hold their hand or have the ability to have physical closeness.



What's been the most personal challenge during this experience?

When residents have passed away; it's always sad to lose someone. I miss our LTC community and my colleagues who have been off.

What's been your most rewarding aspect of working during the outbreak:

When we hear that our residents have been cleared and to see them recovered.

What are the learnings you are take forward with you when the outbreak is concluded?

The need to remain vigilant even after the outbreak. We cannot let our guard down and we should never take for granted how hard we have worked to get here. I do not want to be back in the place we were when the outbreak started.

STAFF SUPPORTS:

Your wellness is important & you are not alone:

- Email: covidwellness&support@providencehealth.bc.ca
- Support Line: 604-806-9925 or ext. 69925
 - Provides call-back option, including evenings and weekends
 - To speak with a colleague who is trained to provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) (this is not a crisis line). The voicemail and email will only be checked Monday-Friday between 0830-1630.
- Supports include:
 - Virtual/remote availability PHC trained PFA employees/Psychologists
 - More Urgent Emotional Support: Contact EFAP 24/7 (**until August 31, 2020**): 604-872-4929 or 1-800-505-4929
 - PHC Occupational Health & Safety: Contact: Sandy Coughlin, OH&S Director – 604-806-8635; 604-341-6272