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July 15, 2020

HCC Vice Presidents
Regional Health Authorities

Re: In-facility Respite & Interfacility Transfers

Over the past few months the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) implemented a range of measures to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in care facilities, To protect those most vulnerable, on March 18th the Ministry of Health directed health authorities to temporarily halt the provision of in-facility respite care and suspend interfacility transfers.

As the province has had some success in flattening the curve and cases of COVID-19 continue to decline, consideration has been given to how to safely restart certain services that have been suspended. The Ministry recognizes the impact that suspending in-facility respite has had on caregivers and that suspending interfacility transfers may impact clients waiting to transfer from short-stay beds or to their preferred care homes. The Ministry, in consultation with HAs, has determined that in-facility respite care and interfacility transfers may now resume, as long as precautions are taken to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Health authorities are advised of the following:

In-facility Respite:

The resumption of services must follow regional MHO directions (including restricting respite within facilities with active COVID-19 outbreaks).

All clients being admitted for in-facility respite must adhere to a 14-day isolation requirement (droplet and contact precautions).

Where clients cannot or will not adhere to isolation and physical distancing requirements, sites should refer to [COVID-19 Ethics Analysis: Intervening When Patients or Residents Pose a Risk of COVID-19 Transmission to Others](#) to inform any decision regarding admission to in-facility respite.

Interfacility Transfers

- The resumption of services must follow regional MHO directions (including restricting transfers between facilities with active COVID-19 outbreaks).

Precautions (e.g., 14-day isolation) for interfacility transfers will be at the direction of the MHO based on assessed regional risk.



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I commend your hard work to put necessary safety measures in place. Your thoughtful planning will help seniors and staff stay safe as we move through the next phases of our pandemic in BC. Ministry staff will continue to engage with health authority home and community care leads to discuss issues and provide direction and advice in response to the situation as it evolves.

Sincerely,

Teri Collins

Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Services Division
Ministry of Health

Sincerely,

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