



**For Immediate Release | March 21, 2020**

## **Changes to protect seniors receiving care**

Interior Health is making changes to long-term care and community programs and services to protect those most vulnerable to COVID-19 and address potential pressures on the acute care system. The changes include:

- Temporarily suspending inter-facility transfers (moving individuals from one care home to another), except in circumstances of intolerable risk. Clients' place on the wait list for transfer will not be impacted by this change.
- Prioritizing admissions to long term care from acute care over those from community where possible.
- Temporarily suspending all adult day programs.
- Temporarily suspending in-facility respite care, except in circumstances of intolerable risk and for those who require palliative (end of life) care.

These changes will enable health care staff to focus on increased surveillance and infection prevention protocols and prevent the spread of COVID-19 to our vulnerable seniors.

Current clients will be contacted directly by Interior Health staff to discuss alternate services and supports where appropriate. Individuals or families who have questions should speak to their care manager or contact their local home health office.

Interior Health recognizes the challenges facing individuals and families and will do everything possible to support them through this unprecedented time.

### **Visitors to long-term care**

Interior Health, along with all other B.C. regional health authorities, is restricting visitors in long-term care to essential visits only. Essential visits include compassionate visits for end-of-life care and visits that support care plans for residents based on resident and family needs (e.g., families who routinely visit to provide assistance with feeding or mobility.)

As is always the case, individuals who are sick or are feeling unwell should avoid visiting any care home.

*Note: As of March 21, Interior Health has no COVID-19 outbreaks in our long-term care homes. COVID-19 testing is currently included in all testing done for respiratory illness in long-term care facilities.*

For the latest COVID-19 information visit the BC Centre for Disease Control website: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

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