



Calgary Regional Office, 501 - 5920 Macleod Trail S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2H 0K2
Tel: 403-255-4969 Fax: 403-252-6591

To: All Intercare Residents, Hospice Patients and Family Members

From: Ian Woodcock
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Date: March 22, 2020

Re: **COVID-19 – Open Letter to Our Residents, Hospice Patients and Family Members**

Since COVID-19 began to take a foot-hold here in Alberta, across Canada and indeed around the World – especially in the past two weeks - we have experienced unprecedented times. The situation continues to evolve quickly, as all levels of government in Canada and across the globe issue new statements each and every day, announcing further efforts and restrictions to “flatten the curve” and prepare for the impact of COVID-19 on our healthcare system. In turn, there is a growing sense of stress, concern and fear of the unknown that is being felt by everyone. While this is completely understandable, COVID-19 is a call to action by every facet of society and we must all do our part to support one another and work together to get through this public health crisis.

Recently, many of you would have seen that the USA - Canada border has closed for non-essential traffic. While this represents another important step to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the government has assured us that the supply of food and other essentials will remain uninterrupted. As such, I am asking all our staff and family members to please do our part and buy only what we need to take care of ourselves and our other family members at the grocery stores, online and at other retail stores. This will ensure that all of our fellow citizens can also access what they need to manage safely during these uncertain times, while reducing excess consumer buying and supporting the ability of healthcare provider organizations, including Intercare, to acquire critically needed supplies from distributors, including hand soap, hand sanitizer, face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning products and toilet paper.

These are substantial changes and new challenges reflecting a very different world in which all of us must do our best to manage and cope. Some of the measures and decisions we have made thus far may require further adjustments in the days and weeks ahead, as we receive new information and directives from AH and AHS. That said, we believe all of the decisions we are making, and the measures we are putting in place, are critical towards maximizing the safety of our residents, hospice patients, staff and other essential personnel (e.g. attending physicians). The “new normal” caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly keep evolving in the coming weeks and I promise to do my best, working closely with other corporate and site level leadership personnel, to keep you up all up to date. I humbly ask for your collective support, patience and understanding on behalf of our entire staff and other essential personnel, as we do our best to keep our homes operating as safely and effectively as possible, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Please know that as a family member myself, who currently has a loved one living in a long term care (LTC) facility in Vancouver, I completely understand the overwhelming number of issues, questions, worries and concerns that you have regarding COVID-19 and your need to have reassurance that your loved ones remain safe and well cared for during this pandemic. In this regard, I want to assure you that our heroic and dedicated staff and other essential personnel are continuing to make every effort possible to ensure that our residents, hospice patients and your loved ones’ overall needs continue to be met, inclusive of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual considerations. With our recent and extremely difficult decision to preclude family members from visiting our homes (except in the extenuating circumstance where an LTC resident or hospice patient is deemed by their Care Team to be at end of life) to further reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, please know that our staff and other essential personnel are making additional efforts to go “above and beyond” their normal duties and responsibilities. This includes where possible, taking additional time to interact with, and talk to, residents and/or hospice patients, asking how the residents and/or hospice patients are doing and feeling, offering additional social and/or emotional support and calming reassurance.

Finally, I would like to close by making one last request - where you become aware of any of our staff or other essential personnel going above and beyond to help a resident, hospice patient or anyone else within our care homes during these challenging times, please take a moment to share their act of exceptional caring and kindness with me through our website at www.intercarealberta.com. There is nothing more uplifting and inspiring than the actions of good people towards others in extraordinary times. I will do my best to ensure we share the positive feedback stories on our web site and in other ongoing communications to residents and families, as and when they are received.

With sincerest gratitude and appreciation for your ongoing patience, understanding and support during these unprecedented times,

Ian Woodcock, BSc, MHSA, CHE
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer