

Committee Report

To:	Chair and Members of the Committee of Management
Committee Date:	June 9, 2020
Subject / Report No:	LTCR-CM- 19-20
Title:	June 2020 COVID 19 Update
Prepared by:	Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long Term Care
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Grey County
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee of Management as presented; Endorsed by County Council June 25, 2020 per Resolution CC62-20;

Recommendation

1. That Report LTCR-CM-19-20 regarding a COVID-19 Update be received for information.

COVID-19 Testing

June marks the third month of navigating the pandemic and emergency measures related to COVID 19. Our homes are prepared and remain vigilant. The emergency order is extended to the end of June.

In May, the homes were part of the mandatory universal swabbing where 717 residents and staff were tested. This was a point in time prevalence study. We received one false positive result at Grey Gables. Public Health was required to classify it as a suspect COVID 19 outbreak. Our months of preparation were quickly put into place, all residents, families and staff were notified, home areas closed, and residents isolated to their rooms. Infection control measures enhanced all within a couple of hours of receiving the news. Public Health worked quickly to retest the positive case and within three days notification was received of a negative result.

Ontario Health provided a [directive](#) on June 4, 2020 that all long term care staff should be tested at reasonable intervals and a minimum of twice in the month of June. This will require a slightly different process than that of the point prevalence testing. While the earlier testing was coordinated with the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit, the Ontario

Health directive removes them from this role. Each home is required to coordinate their own strategy for completing the testing. This poses some challenges, including; swab supply, staff compliance, organizational time and efforts, tracking of results. A plan to support this initiative and test staff during their regular work hours is under development. However, if staff come in on their own time and are willing to be tested compensation for one hour of pay is recommended. The process for positive test results remains unchanged. The Health Unit will be notified by the lab, and an outbreak declared in the home.

Planning for Phased in Re-opening

As the community begins to reopen, there have been many discussions about what this means in long term care. The social and emotional wellbeing of our residents has always been our focus and the Colour It Connect program has allowed loved ones to stay connected. After consultation with Public Health and our clinical teams our homes introduced window visits just in time for Mother's Day. These have been very well received, however do not meet the needs of all our residents. Planning for introducing outside visits has begun with a goal to have this in place for Father's Day. At the regional level a guiding principle document to support long term care homes in planning for safe visiting in long term care is being created. Once this document is released it will help guide our homes for visitor expansion to ensure we are meeting the needs of our residents in these challenging times.

Each home is also developing a plan for a measured approach to a new normal in long term care. All the restrictions that were put into place at the beginning of the pandemic to prevent and manage an outbreak of COVID 19 remain in place. The next steps are determining what measures must remain in place and what can be scaled back or adjusted. Our guiding principles for this work are the overall wellbeing of the residents, staffing resources, PPE supplies, Infection Prevention and Control strategies and fiscal responsibility. This plan must also include measures to continuously evaluate and ramp back up strategies if necessary.

Home Operations

Regular virtual meetings for families and staff are being held. Over the past few months, our homes have also created wonderful videos that have been shared in the monthly newsletters.

Our staffing levels are adequate at the present time, and we have continued to recruit for nursing, program and dietary staff, approximately 5 redeployed staff are working at Grey Gables and Lee Manor and all three homes have hired temporary Emergency Support Workers who are assisting all departments. Our homes have returned to full

Point of Care documentation and our program staff are now conducting small home area group activities but still maintaining physical distancing.

Financial Impacts

Responding to COVID 19 and complying with provincial directives has required significant investments in additional staff time, equipment for the homes like bedside trays for in-room meals and PPE for staff. Barring outbreaks in the homes, there are adequate supplies to carry us through to December 2020. We are reviewing our staffing strategies to ensure we are staffing to the level appropriate for the current level of risk.

COVID 19 expenditures are being tracked and there will be a reconciliation between these, and the special funding received from the province.

The details surrounding pandemic pay are being assessed as we receive them. Corporate Services Director Kevin Wepler has sent a memo to update staff on the status.

The Ministry has advised there will be no rate increase for resident accommodation until January 1, 2021.

Conclusion

June is Senior's month, recognizing all the contributions our seniors have made to our communities. The provincial theme is Aging Strong: Respect and Protect our Seniors. Grey County staff are committed and dedicated to working collaboratively with the healthcare sector on new strategies, implementing outbreak protocols, managing and monitoring PPE supplies and ensure ongoing communication with residents, families, staff and the community.