



COVID-19 Outbreak Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre

Frequently Asked Questions

General:

On which floors/in which units have the positive Covid cases been found?

We currently have COVID-19 cases on our second and third floors at Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre, and our employees are following all public health orders in order to limit its spread as much as possible.

What is the overall, general plan here to try and curtail this thing in your site? Yes, I know everyone is doing what they can, but what's the plan? Or are you just riding it out?

We have implemented all public health recommendations and infection, prevention and control protocols. This includes employees wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks, face shields and gowns, and we have implemented an ongoing audit system to remind employees of proper use. Employees are also reminded and required to perform proper hand hygiene at all times. Enhanced cleaning continues, which means high touch areas are being cleaned and disinfected three times a day, and low touch surfaces daily. In addition, maintaining physical distancing is something that we are striving for, however, with the resident population it can be difficult at times. Our employees are working hard to mitigate the risk.

To what extent is AHS present at the site and monitoring the facility to ensure that practices within and outside the building are being adhered to?

We are working in collaboration with Alberta Health Services daily. AHS has assisted and continues to support the site with the swabbing of employees and residents. This is a great help to the care home. As part of quality improvement, AHS has been on site recently to conduct infection, prevention and control audits, as well as quality control audits. We have received positive feedback and any recommendations have been actioned. Additionally, AHS has assigned two nurse practitioners, two nurses and a Social Worker to help provide added care. We appreciate their partnership and assistance.

Can you go back to disposable cutlery and dishes until this pandemic is over?

Currently, the use of disposable plates and cutlery by ill residents is not recommended by Public Health for outbreak management. Dishes, cutlery and glassware, are washed and sanitized in an industrial dishwasher that meets Health Canada's requirements. This includes monitoring and recording water temperatures to ensure compliance.

My good friend is one of the heads of Trillium Health in Ontario, and he said their protocols in outbreak buildings has been to make sure windows are open in negative-tested residents' rooms to lessen the chance of HVAC or forced air transmissions and to lessen the chance of air borne contamination. I am not sure if residents' rooms have windows that can open, but for those that do h, could you please consider adopting this policy.

All of our resident windows can be opened at any time that a resident wishes. Thank you for sharing this information with us – it's something our Emergency Operations Centre is considering.

Staffing:

I understand as of July 17, that nine staff have tested positive for COVID-19. How is the Southgate center handling this issues and ensuring that there isn't a decrease in staffing levels?

We are so proud of the work our employees at the care home are doing daily. Working through this outbreak is no easy task, and our employees have demonstrated commitment and courage, while working hard to keep our residents safe. Having said that, we are actively looking at ways to provide them with supports, including recruitment of additional staff, as well as employee assistance resources.

Has more staff been hired to look after those that have tested positive? I assume that they would need more care.

We are actively recruiting to hire more employees to provide additional support at the care home. When we have been able to bring in extra staffing, we have done so, as we want to provide our residents and employees with all of the help and support we can.

Are the staff also being tested routinely due to the possibility of one of them being asymptomatic?

We are following all public health recommendations on testing employees. AHS was at the care home and assisted us with swabbing our employees, and will continue to partner with us on this initiative. Employees are also screened twice a day, including temperature checks, and reminded to self-monitor for symptoms throughout their shift. If they start to feel unwell, they are to notify their supervisor, and they will be assisted with leaving the care home quickly and safely.

Are staff members working between floors?

Wherever possible, we are grouping employees together to create cohorts.

However, this isn't always possible as we deal with staffing. This is another reason why we are actively trying to recruit at the care home and bringing in additional resources whenever possible.

Can the first floor have its own set of employees at this time?

We are trying our best to limit the movement of employees within the care home, but as I stated before, it is unfortunately not always possible. We continue to educate our employees on all Public Health Orders, including putting on, taking off and wearing PPE to help reduce the risk of transmission.

Residents:

In terms of being transparent, could you include in your update how many of the residents that test positive are in the hospital?

We have had three residents who tested positive and were transferred to hospital. We are sad to report that one resident who was hospitalized has now passed away and our thoughts and prayers go out to their family.

I heard that the residents that test positive for COVID-19 are being isolated. Could you provide details on what you mean by "isolated"? (i.e. are they in a room by themselves? Are all the residents that test positive staying in one area of the Southgate care center? If so where? Etc.)

Wherever possible, we are grouping residents together to create cohorts. When we say that we are isolating our ill residents, it means that they are supported in their rooms, to the best of our ability.

Are residents with COVID-19 being isolated in their own rooms? (concern regarding shared rooms where 1 resident is positive.)

We have shared resident rooms at our Southgate Care Centre, and this has created additional challenges when it comes to isolating ill residents. Whenever possible, we are grouping residents into cohorts to help reduce the risk of transmission.

I am very concerned about those residents that have tested positive, but also those that have tested negative. What are you doing for the wellbeing of the residents that test negative?

Our employees who normally provide recreation programming are currently assisting with other areas – we are sure you can appreciate it's all hands on deck right now. That being said, they are still looking at opportunities to do some one-to-one activities that maintain physical distancing. As well, virtual visits are still being scheduled.

We have seen residents outside the facility smoking without any protection. Is it not possible that these residents could come into contact with Covid positive people when they are outside the facility?

As per the CMOH orders, residents who are not ill are allowed to go outside the care home for this reason. They are advised when they leave the building that they must follow physical distancing requirements. As well, each resident who leaves the care home is screened when they leave, including a temperature check, and rescreened upon entry. If they don't pass the screening, they are automatically put into self-isolation for 14 days. Hand hygiene must also be completed when they return to the care home, and the resident is directed to return directly to their room or wing and advised that they cannot stop and visit with anyone else along the way. Residents are encouraged to wear masks as they come and go into the building.

What about people from other floors who smoke? Are they being allowed to elevator downstairs to go outside?

There are protocols in place, such as limiting the number of people in the elevator at any one time to two, in order to maintain physical distancing. The elevator is also considered a high touch area, and the buttons and railings are cleaned three times a day. We continue to promote frequent hand washing for all of other residents and staff.

Protocol/Procedural:

What is the criteria for determining when a resident who has COVID-19 is taken to the hospital?

The decision to send a resident to the hospital is one that is informed by their goals of care and in consultation with the resident or their legal guardian. It is vitally important that goals of care are discussed between the resident, their legal health representative, other family members and the resident's physician. Having this in place assists with making appropriate decisions and decreasing stress during these difficult times. This decision is also made in consultation with the attending physician.

How often is AHS inspecting/assessing the Southgate Care Center's COVID-19 protocol procedure?

We are working very closely with Alberta Health Services and Public Health. They are advising us, and we are providing them with daily updates. We are appreciative of their support and guidance during this time.

In cases where residents are in semi-private rooms and one person in that room tests positive - what's being done to keep the other (who has tested negative) safe?

Wherever possible, we are grouping residents together to create cohorts.

Communications:

Can you please provide a text document to refer to rather than a video? In the past an email or PDF was sent out, so I can go back and find information faster than from a video.

All of the communication that we have sent out to families and residents is on our website, gss.org, under the COVID-19 page.

Is there a website or Facebook group or staff liaison so that we can find out how things are going?

The best place to find information is on our website, gss.org. While we do have a Facebook page and share some info on it, specific information for the Southgate Care Centre outbreak can be found on the website.

Is it possible to develop a way to communicate easily and with the least amount of staff time to check on progress?

We are working with the care home to determine how we can provide support and respond to the many inquiries we're getting as soon as possible. We want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding. As you can appreciate, that with the number of residents we serve at the care home, there are a lot of calls to return. We know that when you call you want to know specifically how your loved one is doing, and that requires a clinical employee to respond, which can be difficult when they are also providing care.

Are you informing residents and family members about test results?

All positive test results will be communicated as soon as we are notified at the care home. Employees are trying to update families with this information as soon as possible, and are also trying to notify families of negative results as well.