

September 26, 2020



Dear residents and loved ones of Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre,

Many people continue to reach out to the care home regarding the allegations surrounding the lawsuit. At this time, due to the fact that this is considered active litigation, we are not in a position to comment about the assertions. We are working closely with our residents, employees, partners and our legal team to address these allegations. I would like to assure you that we are taking this matter very seriously and will be responding through the appropriate legal channels. It is important to note that what has been presented in the statement of claim are allegations.

Further to this, and in order to provide additional reassurance to our families and residents, on September 24, in addition to previous audits that have been done throughout the outbreak, Southgate underwent an audit from both Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services to evaluate the care being delivered and to address any concerns that have been brought forward. I can report that no resident care issues were identified in these audits.

Moving Forward

Where possible, we are looking to get back to normal operations following all current Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) orders and guidelines. This includes implementing meal service in the main dining rooms. To keep everyone safe, tables will less than six residents at them, and these residents will be cohorted (grouped) for all meals moving

forward. The tables will also be appropriately distanced from each other. Some of the other processes that are currently in place to continue keeping everyone at the care home safe include:

- Continuous use of masks in all building areas.
- Employees and residents being screened daily along with a temperature check.
- Ongoing education huddles with employees to reinforce personal protective equipment use.

As I mentioned to you in my last update, we have undertaken work to ensure the care home is prepared to allow visitation and resident outings as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders 29 and 32. We know that many of you are anxiously waiting to visit with your loved ones, and we are doing everything we can to ensure processes are in place to keep everyone safe and to prevent another outbreak.

Safe Visitation

If you have visited the care home in the last 24 hours, you may have noticed some outside perimeter markings (caution tape) that have been erected around the building. On the direction of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), the perimeter markings were required in order to ensure that physical distancing is being maintained during window visits. We are actively working with OHS to see if other options are available to help facilitate window visits.

In order to ensure the safety of the residents and our employees, Occupational Health and Safety has indicated that we require all window visits to be called in ahead of time. In order to accommodate this direction, loved ones should call the care home at 780-431-3860 and leave a message with the time and date they will be visiting and the name of the resident they are coming to see. If you forget to book a window meeting in advance, we kindly ask that you please call and leave a message with the details of your visit, as this is necessary for contact tracing purposes. While at a window meeting, the following protocols need to be followed:

- Undertake proper hand hygiene.
- Remain behind the caution tape in order to ensure physical distancing of 6ft is maintained.
- Ensure you are on the ground level; no props or equipment can be used to elevate oneself;
- Do not pass anything through the window; and
- Please reschedule your visit if you have any COVID related symptoms or are feeling unwell.

[Order 29](#) allows for other types of safe visitation at the care home, and we currently expect to be able to allow indoor and outdoor visits as of Wednesday, September 30, 2020. Visits will need to be scheduled in order for us to manage the flow of people and to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to see their loved ones. Due to physical distancing and other public health measures that we need to follow, we have to limit the number of people entering the care home at any one time, which is why arranging visits in advance is crucial. Details of these visits will be made available to you on Monday September 28, through another letter update.

Attached with this letter are two resources from the Alberta government that provide important information on safe visiting guidelines. Once visitation can begin, visiting restrictions will be as follows:

- Indoor access for designated family/support person(s):
 - Residents may name up to two individuals for this role, and care home employees will be reaching out to residents and legal health representatives to determine who these people will be.
 - Access to indoor visitors shall be determined either by resident circumstance, in the case of extenuating circumstances or by the site's risk tolerance assessment, in the case of social visits.
- Access to visitors in extenuating circumstances:
 - End of life (last 4-6 weeks, except in the case of hospice).
 - Change in health status (due to medical/social/spiritual crisis).
 - Pressing circumstances (including financial or legal matters, family crisis).

- Outdoor visits in designated spaces:
 - Up to 5 individuals, including the resident, are permitted if feasible.
 - Access to outdoor visitors shall be permitted when desired by the resident, their alternate decision maker, or designated family/support persons.
- Where desired and if determined safe, indoor social visits with visitors in designated indoor spaces.
 - In settings where the assessed risk of COVID-19 exposure is low and site and resident directed risk tolerance is high, visitors may be permitted for indoor social visits.
 - Access to social visits may be based on site ability to accommodate more people (i.e. maintain physical distancing) and subject to scheduling frequency and duration limitations.
 - Visits in these situations are subject to Indoor Visit requirements regarding the number of people at one time.

Please remember, this is going to take all of us to ensure that visitation can happen safely. It is imperative that once visitation begins, all visitors:

- Understand the risk of exposure to COVID-19 (for self and others);
- Follow all related site policies and public health measures in place; and
- Remain vigilant in protecting themselves and others both while on site as well as off site.

Resident Outings

I know that some of you also have questions regarding resident outings, which is addressed in [Order 32](#) that came out last week. Those in our care who are not required to isolate/quarantine, are encouraged (but not required) to stay on the home's property, except in cases of necessity. The resident/client or the alternate decision maker solely makes the determination of what is necessary for them.

Should a resident/client choose to go out, we are required to communicate best practices to them (or alternate decision maker) for safe outings. A handout will be provided to the resident/client (or alternate decision maker) that will highlight several important points, including the importance of maintaining physical distancing, wearing a mask at all times, proper hand hygiene, and so on. Employees will also discuss and explain the Risk of Unknown Exposure chart, which is attached for your review.

Upon return, the resident/client (or alternate decision maker) is expected to have an open discussion with our employees regarding their risk of unknown exposure during the outing and collectively determine the required safety precaution (please see chart below). As per the Order, all residents/clients who follow the resident outing requirements (attached) as required are considered low risk and additional safety precautions would not need to be implemented upon their return.

Order 32 also makes a distinction between same day outings and off-site overnight stays. Residents/clients are permitted to leave the site for extended stays (over 24 hours) off-site, should they or their alternate decision maker choose so. As with any extended outing, please discuss with the care team to help prepare for the time away. Before a resident or client leaves, employees will go over the safe outings best practices. Continuous use of a mask while on off-site overnight stays is only required if physical distancing cannot be maintained, or as per any municipal bylaws that apply to the area. Upon return, a resident who was away for an overnight, or longer, stay, will be assessed using the table below from the Order to determine what safety precautions need to be implemented.

Safe transportation requirements are also included in this Order, and our employees will be required to communicate them to residents/clients and families as appropriate. The requirements from the Order are as follows:

- Transportation within private vehicles (e.g., if a resident drives self or when a visitor or family member picks up a resident).
 - The resident or visitor/family member will ensure that the vehicle has been cleaned and disinfected prior to the resident entering, with focus on high touch surfaces (e.g. handles, steering wheel, window controls, armrests, seat belts, etc.).
 - If the resident is driving their own private vehicle, this is not required.
 - When driving with passengers, driver and all passengers must wear a mask.
 - The driver and resident/passengers will sit as far apart as possible, minimizing the number of passengers in the vehicle (e.g. one driver with resident sitting as far away as possible).
- Public Transit (including city busses, LRT, handi-bus, taxi, uber, etc.).
 - Follow guidelines set out by municipal transit operators to maintain safety.
 - Maintain safe physical distancing.
 - Wear a mask.
 - Frequently use hand sanitizer and especially after having contact with high touch surfaces (e.g. armrests, doors and railings, handles, etc.).
 - Refer to physical distancing tips for public transportation.
- Transportation within Good Samaritan operated vehicles (shuttle buses, vans, etc.).
 - Operator must ensure vehicle has been cleaned and disinfected prior to residents entering, with a focus on high touch surfaces (e.g. handles, steering wheel, window controls, armrests, seat belts, etc.).
 - The driver and passengers must wear a mask (residents, staff, driver).
 - Sit as far apart as possible, minimizing the number of passengers in the vehicle.
 - Frequently use hand sanitizer and especially after having contact with high touch surfaces (e.g. armrests, vehicle doors and handles, etc.).

Volunteers

Order 32 also allows for volunteers to return to care homes, and we are currently reviewing what that would look like for all of our care and group homes, including at Southgate Care Centre. More information will be shared with you on this in future communications.

Contact Information

I know that the last few months have not been easy for anyone, and I hope that re-opening up the care home and starting to get back to our new normal will provide everyone with some much needed peace of mind. I also encourage you to let us know your feedback as we implement these changes, as your perspective is important to us. If you have any questions, please reach out to the site manager, Kelly Kontek, at (780) 431-3840, or email goodsaminfo@gss.org and our Emergency Operations Team will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Bonnici". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Michelle Bonnici B.A. LL.M
Interim President and CEO

Resident Returning from Same Day Off-Site Activity – Safety Precautions

Risk of Exposure	Activity Off-Site	Safety Precautions
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequent or selective outings • Consistently maintain two (2) metres of distance from others • Mask worn during outings • Consistent hand hygiene • Private vehicle used • All Resident Outing requirements followed 	Twice daily self-check of symptoms for 14 days after returning
Medium	<p><i>There will be many variations that arise between the extremes of high and low risk of exposure</i></p> <p><i>Residents and Operators are encouraged to use their best judgement to determine risk of exposure</i></p>	Continuous use of a mask for 14 days while out of resident room
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not maintain physical distancing and does not wear a mask • Attends large gatherings with known or unknown people • Infrequent or inconsistent hand hygiene • Use of public transit or carpooling where distancing is not consistently maintained and masking is not consistently used • Did not follow Resident Outing Requirements 	14 day quarantine after returning

Resident Returning From Off-Site Overnight Stay – Safety Precautions

Risk Level	Activity Off-Site	Safety Precautions
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household with persons who have low risk of unknown exposure (refer to Table 9) • Followed Resident Outing requirements 	Twice daily self-check of symptoms for 14 days after returning
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household with persons who have medium risk of unknown exposure (refer to Table 9), and • Followed Resident Outing Requirements 	Continuous use of a mask for 14 days while out of resident room
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household with persons who have high risk of unknown exposure (refer to Table 9), or • Stay included participation in public spaces or private events with 15 or more people, known or not known to resident; or • Did not follow Resident Outing Requirements 	14 day quarantine after returning