

Expanded testing of residents and staff in continuing care sites affected by outbreak

Last Friday, April 17, the Government of Alberta announced that Alberta Health is working with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to expand testing for COVID-19 to include asymptomatic residents and staff in continuing care centres in the coming days. This will open the testing up to include those who are not currently exhibiting symptoms, and lead to earlier identification of positive cases in those not displaying symptoms, to help contain the spread of the virus once an outbreak has occurred. This is welcome news, and something that The Foundation has been advocating for within continuing care.

We know our residents and families are anxious to know when and how this will happen. As the test kits and testing protocols are controlled by AHS, The Foundation is still awaiting the direction from AHS in order to be able to implement this at our sites that are experiencing any level of outbreak. We expect this information to be shared imminently, and The Foundation will act immediately at that time.

As soon as we have more information to share on the implementation of this strategy we will advise our residents and families accordingly.

Funding relief for pressures in continuing care

On Monday, April 21, the Government of Alberta also announced new funding to increase staffing of health-care aides to alleviate pressures in contracted continuing care facilities. These supports include additional funding to allow for: increased health-care aide staffing levels; a wage top-up of an additional \$2 per hour for health-care aides; up to 1,000 paid student practicum positions to fast-track certification and get more staff into our continuing care facilities.

The Foundation will continue to provide transparent information to our residents and families to keep informed of our staffing levels, and how this funding support will be implemented once we have more information.

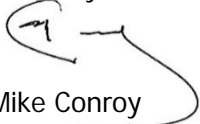
Concern regarding the Cargill plant outbreak

We have heard concern from families regarding the prevalence of confirmed positive cases in Southern Alberta related to the significant outbreak at the Cargill plant in High River. This is a concern of ours too – and a situation that we are monitoring closely. The Foundation is concerned about our employees who may have close contact with or members of their household connected to the Cargill plant, and this is of particular concern for our employees at Tudor Manor, given the proximity of Okotoks and High River.

The Foundation has reached out to our employees to remind them of their requirement to disclose any close connection to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the community, including those with a connection to Cargill. We are offering support to protect the health and safety of our valued employees when they are off-work, in the form of personal protective equipment and/or hotel accommodations if employees are concerned about their potential risk of exposure if there is someone who is required to self-isolate in their household.

We appreciate your continued understanding and support during these difficult times. Together, we will remain BSF Strong!

Sincerely,



Mike Conroy
President and CEO