

**Memo**

**To:** All CLC Staff

**From:** Cindy MacKay-Musso, Interim Executive Director

**Date:** April 22, 2020

**RE:** Communication Update for Staff #10

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Dear CLC Staff,

This will be a long one, so please make yourself comfortable. After collating the survey results, and speaking with many of you in person, I would like to address a few prominent themes: CLC test results for staff and participants, the cleaners, COVID-19 testing for priority groups, PPE, Manager directives, and fine line between the DS sector and LTC.

**Will we know when someone tests positive?**

Absolutely! Notifications and our response to the situation will be communicated to all staff once we have followed protocols to support the individual and protect those who may have been exposed. Should you hear anything through an informal channel please be patient as we assess and act on the situation. We will share factual and complete information to everyone at the same time.

**Cleaners**

Well, sometimes things don't go according to plan. By now you all know that this service has been put on hold. As we've shared, our intention was to mitigate risk not to incite fear. We are sorry, we got this one wrong. Please know we are going to continue to work with all of you, and the Managers, to gather feedback and ideas on how we can move forward with enhanced cleaning in the homes for the duration of this pandemic.

**Testing**

Premier Ford has tasked Public Health to increase testing dramatically to vulnerable populations. Information received to date outlines that prioritization of testing will be hospitals and long-term care facilities first, followed then by group homes, including supported independent living, and other congregate living arrangements. Further, the intent is to bring the testing to the location so that people do not need to leave the safety of their homes to be tested. We have not received any further information of when, if, or how testing will occur. We will continue to update you as we get more information.

## **PPE**

I understand that PPE (both the level of supply and our protective nature over it) is causing concern. Here's what I can share. At this moment in time we have a sufficient inventory of N95 masks, booties, goggles, gloves and gowns. To that end, we are protecting this inventory of essential PPE should we have positive cases or until the supply chain opens up and exceeds demand. We are continually trying to increase our supply and sourcing new suppliers daily, as we plan for a worst-case scenario. We are working tirelessly to ensure that we have as much as possible if the day comes that we need it.

Many of you have asked about the logic and/or the effectiveness of the dust masks that are in the PPE bins in each home. These masks, which are effective particulate filters, are a first precaution in the event a participant or staff person exhibits symptoms. These dust masks should be used in the interim period between when the symptoms are discovered and when further direction is given by the Manager. Please note that each home still has their regular complement of N95's in their PPE inventory and more will be delivered within a half hour of when they are requested. At this time, we do not have enough N95's to spread a further supply out to each home, we are keeping them readily available to send when needed.

## **Where is my Manager?**

We have asked Managers to limit their visits to one home per day, as we understand the higher level of risk associated with cross contamination. This means they will be physically less present, but by no means less management/support present. They are, as always, available by phone and email and a front-porch visit, with the appropriate amount of social distancing, is always an option. They are your resource, please continue to use them.

## **Where do we fit in?**

You hear a lot in the media about new funding, new government programs, and new operation guidelines, etc. And then when you ask us about them, we tell you it's not us and no we're not getting any more money. Disability sector agencies like ours operate under different legislation than private-sector businesses, health care, and long-term care. Many of the funding announcements and subsidy programs pertain to those sectors, but sadly not us. There has been one announcement of \$40 million in new funding made available to our sector, and it is shared by Children and Youth Protective Care and Gender Based Services. As I mentioned in an earlier communication, this funding cannot be used towards pay increases. It has been earmarked for COVID specific expenses related to PPE, isolation areas, travel, food, housing, etc. To receive some of this funding, we are submitting a claim once per month which is itemized and we have to confirm that we are operating at a deficit in order to get our claim reviewed. I also want to point out, that we are not being reimbursed for any sick or vacation time paid out as a result of people self-isolating. We are tracking this for our own internal purposes and so we can report to the Board.



**So now what?**

I have spent a lot of time visiting many of the homes in the last two weeks and I have enjoyed it immensely. I am thoroughly impressed with the positivity at every location I've visited. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to educate and share with me. If I have not been to your home yet, don't worry, I will be there in the coming weeks! You give me raw, real perspective that I will not get anywhere else. Your input is invaluable because as we saw with the cleaners, we are not all-knowing. In all of this, no one is an expert and we are all learning more about pandemic protocol than we ever wanted to. Throughout all of this I know CLC has what it takes to make it through if we band together and use our collective knowledge, skills, and compassion.

Positive thoughts PROMOTE positive outcomes!

Stay safe and be well,

Cindy