

COVID-19

April 2, 2020

First of all, I would like to personally thank each of you for your commitment and dedication to TCS and those we serve. The last three weeks we have seen incredible change and we have been asked to step up and be present while many others are encouraged to say home. We know what we do is important and this was recognized by government.

Last Thursday services like those provided by TCS, were declared to be an essential service. This includes both residential and community services.

Further, our sector was exempted from any restriction forbidding our staff members from working at multiple sites.

We are on the front line of this pandemic and when people are applauding health workers, they are also applauding you. Our work is essential and now, as never before, lives are in our hands.

VIGILANCE

We know that safeguards work. We also know that as humans we tend to let things slip after a while. In order to beat this pandemic, we must be vigilant and not let our guard down. Even if the curve begins to subside, we must 'double down' until the virus is eradicated. We do this to protect the individuals that we support and to protect our family and friends and ourselves. The four most important safeguards are:

1. Keeping your distance. Leave 2 meters between yourself and others;
2. Washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Hot water is not required;
3. Coughing or sneezing into the crook of your arms discarding the tissue; and,
4. Increasing our cleaning regime.

Our premier extended the BC state of emergency last evening and has asked us all to recommit to stay home and to help bend the curve. This virus can be beaten. Now is not the time to relax.

GATHERINGS

Dr. Bonnie Henry, the BC Provincial Health Officer, has forbidden gatherings of any size. All staff members are **required** to report to their Manager or Director if they have been part of a gathering. If so, it is highly likely that we will require these staff to be off work for 14 days. TCS will not continue to pay them while they are quarantined if they have ignored the orders of the Provincial Health Office. These staff members will be able to use their accruals or apply for EI.

PPE'S

We have struck a provincial task force to acquire additional PPE's. We have found some sources and are now putting together emergency kits for each of our staffed facilities and for our CI workers out in the community. The PPE's are to be used when we have a supported individual who is symptomatic or tests positive. The kit will provide sufficient PPE's for 72 hours by which time we will have assessed the situation and replaced the PPE's as required.

There is an international shortage of PPE's and we have had PPE's go missing. We are instituting inventory checks and sign offs at the beginning of every shift. This may be a bothersome task, but if there is an outbreak, it will be the PPE's that will help ensure your safety.

We will also be distributing posters and videos on how to put on the PPE's and how to safely remove them.

SCAMS

Again, please remind your staff, friends and families to beware of scams. Some are very sophisticated. We are reminded to never click on a suspicious or 'too good to be true' offer. If you receive an email or phone call, do not respond; go directly to the source to determine if the offer or threat is true. Also, consult the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. This is the link to COVID-19 scams: <https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/features-vedette/2020/covid-19-eng.htm>



MENTAL HEALTH

These times typically separate or unite. Let's make sure that we are reaching out to our friends, family and coworkers to ensure that we are supporting each other and staying both mentally and physically healthy.

Front line health workers are being identified and praised but you do not often hear about Community Support Workers. Our work is an essential service and I applaud you all for the support that you provide.

RECOGNIZING OTHERS

While we are the front line, so are a number of others who often go unrecognized. These include our grocery store workers, truck drivers, gas station attendants, postal workers and all of the others who are keeping the world running. Let's not forget to thank these unsung heroes.

Thank you for all that you do.

Remember to reach out and connect with others, to stay strong and to please stay safe.

Bob Cornish, CEO