



Madawaska Valley  
Association for  
Community Living

19491 Opeongo Line  
P.O. Box 1178  
Barry's Bay, ON K0J 1B0  
Tel: (613) 756-3817  
Fax: (613) 756-0616

## Info Memo

**To:** All MVACL STAFF

**From:** MONICA PRYMACK

**Date:** March 13, 2020

As everyone is aware, the Covid19 virus is creating much stress and anxiety for people. The most important thing we can all do at this time is remain calm. MVACL has had in place for many years now, an emergency preparedness and disaster response plan (See policy on our website under resources.) While I encourage everyone to read this policy in full, I have attached the section specifically pertaining to a Pandemic emergency. It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with this document. If you have questions or concerns please contact your manager.

It is our expectation that all teams will work together to ensure MVACL continues to provide safe, quality care for those we support, and each other.

The government has shut down schools until April 6<sup>th</sup>, and is discouraging people from attending events where large numbers of people gather. For this period of time, The Learning Centre at Activities Plus will be closed to the public. People supported in our SIL and CPS programs are being contacted to see if they wish to continue to have services provided during this time. Only those people will have access to the Learning Center and only during the time they are supported by staff.

Should any staff or supported people develop cold or flu symptoms, staff will contact their doctor or the family health team, who will provide instruction on how to proceed. Do not go to Emergency Department unless you receive instruction by a health professional to do so. Of course regular unrelated emergencies will proceed as usual.

The DSS training scheduled for the morning of March 23<sup>rd</sup> is cancelled. Anyone wishing to work those hours should contact their manager for instruction regarding location. Alternatively, you may take those hours without pay.

Staff providing support are encouraged to stay 'close to home' during this period. Going outdoors for walks and fresh air 1:1 is encouraged as long as people are asymptomatic.

Any staff who returns from being out of the country, or who has attended an event with large numbers of people, must communicate this to their manager prior to returning to work.

Hand washing and particular attention to hygiene is of the utmost importance.

In order to reduce employee absenteeism and reduce the spread of germs, including the flu and the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Renfrew County & District Health unit recommends that individuals:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just cleaned your hands with soap
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or into your arm, not your hand
- If possible, stay home if you are sick
- Avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care centres if you are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- It is still recommended to get your flu shot if you haven't already as the flu virus is still circulating in the community (To book an influenza vaccination, call RCDHU at: 613-735-8666)

For further information see their website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/>

Your management team will be available throughout the duration of this situation.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your manager.

Thanks for your cooperation and commitment to our important work.

Stay well,  
Monica

## **Pandemic Outbreak:**

MVACL develops and keeps updated a Pandemic Influenza Plan.

The following Pre-Pandemic Plan of Action and Active Pandemic Plan of Action will be followed in the event of a health emergency situation related to an impending flu pandemic or actual flu pandemic.

### **Pre-Pandemic Plan of Action:**

When there are a few cases either contained or in another Country/Province

- The Executive Director, Manager or designate will investigate the possibility of the virus spreading further and keep in touch with the Renfrew County District Health Unit regarding our risk.
- Employees will strictly follow the Preventative Action procedures outlined in the Town of Barry's Bay/Killaloe Hagarty & Richards Township Disaster Plan.

### **When the virus is no longer contained and geographically is spreading closer to the Renfrew County District:**

- With the assistance of the Health Department the Executive Director, Manager or designate will assess the rate at which the virus is traveling and begin to plan to ensure in the event of a pandemic we have enough supplies for a six to eight week period. Refer to the List of Necessary Supplies.
- People supported and employees are to avoid public places outside of the Renfrew County District in areas affected by the pandemic, unless absolutely necessary, until the threat passes.
- Management team will assess housing possibilities of people supported and begin initial preparations for alternate living arrangements.

### **When a Pandemic has reached the Renfrew County District:**

- Manager or designate will ensure people supported and employees of the Agency are notified using a call-out system, upon receiving direction from the Executive Director, Manager or designate.
- The Learning Centre, will be closed until the threat passes and will reopen when deemed appropriate.
- All people supported and employees are to avoid public places whenever possible until the threat passes. This includes cancelling any unnecessary doctor's appointments, extra-curricular activities, employee meetings, training, conferences etc.

- People supported that can go home to their families will be encouraged to do so and any unoccupied residential locations will be closed.
- Administration employees will continue to provide only necessary tasks, and otherwise, may be reassigned to other duties as required.
- If there is a large shortage of employees due to illness, arrangements will be made to centrally locate people in designated areas/houses so they can receive medical attention or supports as required.

**Preventative Action – Employees and People Supported:**

- All employees are to review the procedures regarding caring for people who present symptoms of the flu, to be discussed at team meetings.
- All employees are to review and strictly adhere to hand washing procedures.
- Ensure hand washing is part of the daily routine for people supported.
- Anti-viral soap is to be available in all homes and support areas.
- Basic infection controls shall be used to prevent the further transmission of influenza including cleaning protocols of hard surfaces (i.e., door knobs, counters, tables, and bathroom fixtures), laundering of bedding and clothing.
- Employees and people supported will be encouraged to get the flu shot yearly.
- Information regarding TAMIFLU will be distributed to people supported, their families and employees.
- Persons suffering from flu symptoms will not be allowed to attend any day program, work site or Agency-related activity until such time as they have recovered.

**Active Pandemic Plan of Action: - Notifications:**

Upon notification to MVACL by the Renfrew District Health Unit of a flu pandemic in the Renfrew County area, the following will occur:

- Persons receiving residential supports will be advised by the Manager, or designate on the effect of the pandemic on their living situation. Every effort will be made to ensure the least disruption for people receiving residential supports from the Agency during a flu pandemic.
- Persons receiving day/employment supports will be contacted by the Manger, or designate regarding any changes with respect to change of location of day support, cancellation of a program, their jobsite or other supports. Every effort will be made to ensure the least disruption for people receiving day and/or employment supports during a flu pandemic.
- Families will be notified of current situation with respect to flu pandemic.
- The Executive Director, Manager or designate shall receive an updated list each day from the other Managers or designate regarding the number of people supported by the Agency and employees who have been medically diagnosed with the flu. The medical status and location of those persons receiving support

from the Agency who have the flu, which will be reported to the Renfrew County health Unit as Required.

### **Employee Role and Requirements:**

- Employees will be expected to work their scheduled shifts unless otherwise directed. If there are extenuating circumstances related to their health (i.e., asthma, pregnancy, illness etc.) they will need to inform the Manager or designate immediately and make arrangements appropriate to their situation.
- Employees may be required to work additional shifts during a flu pandemic and while every effort will be made to comply with the Employment Standards Act (ESA) related to Hours Free from Work and Hours of Work, it may be necessary to rely on the exception in the ESA for Emergencies and Exceptional Circumstances. This exception allows an employer to require an employee to work when there's an emergency or when something unforeseen occurs that would interrupt continuous processes. The usual approval process by a Manager or designate will remain in place for employees going into overtime situations.
- Employees from programs which have been closed will be reassigned where needed until threat passes.
- In the case of re-location of people receiving support, medications and pertinent records and any required personal belongings are to be taken to the temporary residence by the Manager, or designate.
- In the event of a flu pandemic, masks, gowns and gloves etc. will be made available as required, with instructions on when and how to use them.
- If a person receiving residential supports displays flu like symptoms (see Influenza Symptoms) the employee on shift will isolate the person from the others. The employee will contact their Manager or designate and make appropriate arrangements for care, which may include contacting the person's medical practitioner.
- If an employee displays flu-like symptoms (see Influenza Symptoms) while on shift, they will wear a mask and discontinue their shift as soon as possible. They will contact their Manager or designate and their medical practitioner as required.

## **List of Necessary Supplies**

- Drinking water
- Food
- Non-perishable (canned, packaged, frozen)
- High energy (protein or fruit bars, peanut butter, nuts, beans)
- Fluids with electrolytes (Pedialite, Gatorade), Juices
- Pet food
- Alcohol Hand Sanitizer
- Cleansing agents (soap, bleach/squirt bottles)
- Medications (current life saving medications)
- Stock medications (Tylenol, Aspirin, Cold/Flu etc.)
- Disposable gowns, gloves and masks, thermometers
- Garbage bags
- Paper products (tissue, toilet tissue, paper towels, personal hygiene products)
- Ensure First Aid Kit supplies are in order
- Cash
- Propane
- Top up fuel in vehicles

## **Influenza Symptoms:**

Influenza is caused by a flu virus which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It usually starts suddenly and may include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Muscle pain and weakness
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Diarrhea and vomiting