

## **Covid-19 Update for CL Hanover**

Over the past few months, Community Living Hanover has responded quickly to implement the necessary steps to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these changes came about as a result of information that has been updated or amended as we have adapted to the crisis. We have extended these measures a number of times since March and continue to evolve as new information becomes available.

**Earlier this week, the provincial government introduced a motion to extend the Declaration of Emergency for up to 2 years.**

This extension is essential to ensuring the continued safety of both the people we support and our staff. The progress we have made so far both as a province and as an organization has been impressive. Despite our success to date, news reports confirm that the fight is far from over. This is especially true in congregate living settings, such as group homes and long-term care facilities. So far, we have managed to keep COVID-19 out of our sites and have ensured people are as safe as possible. The measures we have put in place since March and the hard work of our staff have produced this result.

### **Group Homes**

From the start of the pandemic, we have realigned our work to focus all our efforts on keeping the people we support and our staff safe from COVID-19. Active screening measures are in place in all our sites and staff have been required to limit their employment in the vulnerable people sector to CL Hanover.

Backyard, porch, and park visits began on June 18, 2020. These visits are guided by detailed Government of Ontario restrictions around testing, physical distancing, and cleaning. Restrictions have evolved, with the easing of restrictions in the Province, but visits will continue under certain restrictions and limitations until we are instructed otherwise by the province.

### **Day Programs**

Day programs across CL Hanover were suspended in accordance with Public Health guidance around physical distancing and limiting journeys outside the home to essential needs only. This measure is extended until July 24, 2020. We are working diligently with new guidelines the Ministry and Public Health have distributed so we can put in place the measures to ensure everyone is safe when they return to our programs.

## **CL Hanover Offices**

CL Hanover has taken steps to significantly limit the number of people entering our administrative offices. Only essential staff are permitted entry to our offices, and anyone entering must wear a mask and be actively screened before proceeding into the building. All in-person training remains suspended across the agency.

## **Supported Independent Living**

Many individuals supported or affiliated with CL Hanover live independently in the community with some or infrequent services from CL Hanover. We have recommended that people living independently take measures to limit the number of visitors entering their homes and that they practice physical distancing as much as possible. Our staff are providing support, following all safety precautions and have limited contact to Emergencies and supporting individuals with necessities.

## **Employment Supports**

As much as possible, our employment supports continue to match individuals seeking work. We also continue to support individuals who are working in a CL Hanover facilitated placement.

The pandemic has been challenging and stressful for everyone. The freedom to be engaged in our community, with friends and activities has all been compromised. As much as this has disrupted our daily lives, we must remain vigilant and cautious as our province begins to reopen. The safety of the population we support and our staff remains our top priority. The provincial government introduced legislation to authorize continued emergency orders without the Declaration of Emergency. Many of the measures CL Hanover has taken so far have been guided or mandated by these emergency orders. We expect many of these to continue due to the vulnerabilities of the community we support. In practical terms, this means that many of the government-ordered restrictions on our services will continue for the foreseeable future. While we cannot say exactly what will happen, we know that we will not be able to reopen our services as we know them right away. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine exactly when that will be possible. We are working on a staged plan to loosen some restrictions when the time is right. Thank you for your patience and understanding.