

COVID-19-related outbreak declared in Sudbury long-term care home

Issued: Sunday, April 19, 2020

Today, Jo-Anne Palkovits, President and CEO of St. Joseph's Health Centre confirmed that an outbreak has been declared at St. Joseph's Villa long-term care home in Sudbury. Ministry direction requires a COVID-19 outbreak be declared with a single laboratory confirmed case in a resident or staff member. In this case, one staff member tested positive and is under active follow up with Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

"St. Joseph's Villa is working closely with Public Health Sudbury & Districts to ensure all measures are in place to protect staff and residents. We want to assure staff, patients, and families that the risk of infection in our facilities remains low," said Ms. Palkovits. "None of the residents who were in contact with this employee is symptomatic and all are being tested. Residents continue to be isolated in their individual room. We are relieved to hear our staff member is no longer experiencing symptoms and is safely self-isolating at home," said Ms. Palkovits.

"This is the first instance of a confirmed COVID-19 case being linked to a long-term care or retirement home in Public Health Sudbury & Districts' service area," said Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, Medical Officer of Health with Public Health Sudbury & Districts. "There are no cases among residents in the Villa," added Dr. Sutcliffe

"With the declaration of an outbreak, additional control measures are put in place and overseen by an outbreak control team. In this instance, this includes the priority testing of identified residents and staff members, in addition to the already stringent COVID-19 protection action in place as required by provincial orders and guidance," said Dr. Sutcliffe.

Actions taken to date

As the facility cares for a high-risk population, St. Joseph's Health Care has proactive policies and evidence-based practices in place to prevent any potential spread of infection. As part of precautionary measures with any respiratory outbreak in a long-term care home, all residents all residents are in isolation, in their own rooms, until further notice.

- All St-Joseph's Villa residents are being tested for COVID-19.
- All St-Joseph's Villa staff who were in close contact of the case are being tested for COVID-19.
- All admissions to St. Joseph's Villa have been put on hold.
- Visitor restrictions have been in effect since the beginning of March.
- Staff and residents are practising physical distancing within the home.
- Staff screening occurs at the beginning and end of shifts, including temperature checks and all staff and essential visitors wear masks.
- Residents are being assessed three times a day for symptoms of COVID-19. This includes temperature checks.

Case management and contact tracing

When Public Health Sudbury & Districts receives a report of a positive COVID-19 test result, staff follow-up with the individual as soon as possible. Public health professionals discuss the test results with the individual and explore possible exposure settings as well as close contacts of the case.

At the same time that Public Health conducts follow-up with confirmed cases, staff also begin the process of contact tracing. Through this process, Public Health identifies people who may have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 during the period of time when the person may have been infectious.

The purpose of identifying contacts is to further reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Close contacts are advised of important direction such as testing, self-monitoring, work-related direction, or self-isolation, depending on the specific circumstances.

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate, then contact an [assessment centre](#) or use the [online self-assessment tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care.

For more information on how Public Health conducts follow-up after a positive test result, self-isolation, self-assessment, and assessment centres visit phsd.ca/COVID-19 or call Public Health Sudbury & Districts at 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200).

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