

## RISK INSIGHTS

### RETIREMENT RESIDENCES DURING AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAK

In the context of a pandemic, or any global health crisis, anyone can become ill from infectious diseases, but **certain demographics are at a higher risk of complications from these diseases**, such as those older than 70, those with chronic diseases and those with compromised immune systems.

THIS IS WHY IT IS VITAL TO TAKE EVERY PRECAUTION TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF VIRUSES.

#### Operator guidelines

- Educate residents about the current infectious disease, why these guidelines are being put in place and how they will be implemented.
- Establish specific monitoring procedures for residents who do not follow or are unable to follow the guidelines.
- Avoid gatherings and temporarily suspend all social and group activities.
- Arrange for staff to work at only one facility if possible. If there is a staff shortage, and staff must work at multiple facilities, ensure all staff are strictly following protocols.
- Limit the number of employees in contact with a single resident.
- Suspend visits and non-essential services offered at your residence, except under extenuating circumstances.
- Encourage residents to use technology (smartphones, tablets, etc.) to keep in touch with each other and their loved ones from a distance.
- Cancel all non-essential trips scheduled for residents.
- Ensure all common areas such as dining rooms and lounges have sufficient occupancy limits and are maintaining proper cleaning protocols.
- Limit circulation in common areas.
- Take the necessary steps to ensure that everyone on the facility's premises always follows the recommended practices for infection prevention and control.

#### Infection prevention in private retirement residences

"*Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19*," a document published by the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#), sets out guidelines and recommendations for infection prevention and control. This information can be adapted for retirement residences and long-term care homes.

Particular attention should be paid to the prevention measures recommended in the PHAC document. These recommendations address the following topics:

- Hand hygiene
- Routine practices
- Masking for all staff providing or participating in resident care, and any essential visitors (mask for the duration of shifts)
- Droplet and contact precautions
- Resident placement and accommodation
- Outbreak management
- Handling resident care equipment
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection



### Monitoring the evolution of the crisis and ongoing updates

- Continuously reassess guidelines as the situation evolves.
- Take all necessary precautions to prevent and control infections in your facility. We encourage you to follow the recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Public Health Agency of Canada and your provincial/territorial public health authority.

### Preventing lawsuits

- Treat residents with politeness, fairness, and empathy at all times, and show respect for their independence, dignity, safety and individual needs.
- Provide safe and well-maintained facilities and equipment.
- Maintain up-to-date resident records.
- Fill out and file incident/accident reports.
- Establish a complaint intake and management procedure.
- Give employees and volunteers ongoing training, particularly abuse prevention training.
- Develop a written policy clearly establishing your commitment to abuse prevention. This policy should be read, approved, and signed by all employees and volunteers.
- Regularly review and update your abuse policy.
- Check the references/backgrounds of employees and volunteers.
- Perform random and/or periodic internal and external audits on attendance, maintenance logs, incident or accident reports and resident feedback.

### Cyber threats

Take the necessary precautions to protect your network and its users. Educating employees and residents, having policies and procedures in place and being prepared for the unexpected will help reduce the risk of being the target of a cyberattack.

- Instruct employees and residents to be cautious of the information they post online, as it could be used to acquire passwords or run scams.
- Avoid using personal information when creating passwords.
- Caution employees about using personal devices in your facility and using public Wi-Fi and tell them how they can protect themselves.
- Educate residents and employees about popular scams, such as phishing.

For more information on making your business safer, contact our Risk Services team at **1.833.692.4111** or visit us at **[www.northbridgeinsurance.ca](http://www.northbridgeinsurance.ca)**.

