



To: FH-contracted Facility Medical Directors
Division of Family Practice Long-Term Care Initiative Physician Leads
Division of Family Practice Executive Directors

From: Fraser Health Long-Term Care COVID-19 Physician Task Force
Dr. Akber Mithani, Regional Medical Director, Long-Term Care & Assisted Living
Eric Chi, Lead, Physician Services, Long-Term Care & Assisted Living

CC: Dee Chatha, Director, Long-Term Care Contract Services
Norm Peters, Vice President, Regional Care Integration
Irene Sheppard, Executive Director, Regional Care Integration

Date: Friday, April 3, 2020

Re: Long-Term Care COVID-19 Physician Task Force Memo #3

The Long-Term Care COVID-19 Physician Task Force was created to provide direction for critical physician-related issues in regards to COVID-19 in Fraser Health-funded long-term care homes.

Attachments are referenced in **red** under each point.

1. Personal Protective Equipment in ALL LTC homes

The latest Ministry of Health directive requires all physicians, staff, and contracted staff working in resident care areas wear a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (i.e., face shield, goggles, or safety glasses). Gloves must be worn when providing direct care to residents. In addition, a gown must be worn when providing care to any resident on Droplet Precautions. This is being implemented over the coming days as sufficient equipment is distributed beginning with the most high-risk locations.

This is the case right now, but may change.

2. Recommendation for physicians providing in-patient care at a hospital to find a designate for long-term care

Physicians providing in-patient care at a hospital or direct patient care in a high risk COVID-19 setting may potentially encounter patients who are COVID-19 positive. Such physicians who also have residents in long-term care may potentially act as vectors if they were to provide care in both settings. As per our previous communication, we encourage these physicians to continue to provide care to the residents in LTC virtually. However, The Task Force encourages these physicians to try and ask for a designate to provide any clinically essential on-site care at a long-term care home. Similarly, when possible, a long-term care physician should select a single care home to attend in person and seek a designate for other sites where you have patients. It is recognized that this may not be possible in all communities.



3. New algorithm for resident transfers

This algorithm is based on the Medical Health Officer Class Order on March 22 (points 8 and 9 on p. 5) and provides a guide for resident transfers.

[COVID 19 LTC Resident Transfers March 31 2020](#)

4. Recommendation to utilize the LTC Actively Dying Protocol for seriously ill residents with COVID-19

Based on physicians' experiences at Lynn Valley and other care homes, the current protocol is sufficient for comfort measures. FH Palliative Care physicians are available for clinical case support when required.

An [intensive symptom management pathway](#) developed by Palliative Care physicians (mostly for acute care) is attached as an additional resource. The Task Force recognizes that the suggested measures will be challenging to implement in most LTC homes.

Dr. Nick Petropolis, Palliative Approach Lead, is available to mentor physicians in goals of care conversations or to review difficult MOST and goals of care cases at nick.petropolis@fraserhealth.ca. He will also be hosting a webinar for long-term care physicians to share goals of care conversation tips related to COVID-19.

[Actively Dying Protocol - Caring for Residents in Final Days](#)

[COVID-19 End of Life Symptom Management v.20.03.22](#)

5. Clarification about medication reviews and other on-site meetings

In the March 17 memo, it was recommended that all care conferences occur virtually without explicitly naming other meetings.

The Task Force would like to clarify and emphasize that ALL meetings that typically occur at a care home (ie., medication reviews, etc) should take place virtually unless absolutely clinically essential or if the physician is already on-site for a clinically essential visit.

6. Direct-acting oral anticoagulants now covered by Pharmcare for new patients

Effective March 30, 2020:

- PharmaCare's Limited **Coverage Criteria for direct-acting anticoagulants (DOACs) are changing** for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Patients newly starting anticoagulation treatments are **no longer required to try warfarin**.
- Warfarin is the long-established anticoagulation treatment for the prevention of ischemic strokes in patients with atrial fibrillation (AF), and the treatment of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE). However, its use requires frequent lab testing when therapy is started, which may not be desirable for social distancing during the COVID19 pandemic.
- **DOACs are as effective as warfarin in treating the aforementioned indications and do not require lab testing as frequently.**
- Residents in LTC who are **already on warfarin may be switched to DOACs where it is clinically indicated** as determined by the physician.
- A **Special Authority Form will still be required** and faxed to Pharmacare with a turnaround time of less than 24 hours.



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- Please indicate the following note in section 5 of the form: “INR testing cannot be accomplished due to COVID-19”

7. CPSBC: Guidance for certifying COVID-19 deaths

- If a resident has experienced COVID-19-compatible symptoms before death and has a COVID-19 swab pending, please wait for the result before completing the death certificate.
- If a resident dies with COVID-19-compatible symptoms and was not swabbed before death, one can still do a COVID-19 swab post-mortem, even up to several days after though the sooner the better. This can potentially even be done in the mortuary if the indications are strong enough to warrant this. The death certificate should then be completed only after results of the swab are back.
- It is NOT necessary to consult the coroner for each case that involves COVID-19.

Should you require additional death certificates, email HTLH.VSSStock@gov.bc.ca to order. Include name, address, College ID #, MSP #, and quantity desired, as well as a line about how the physician’s practice is heavy in elderly patients.

[CPSBC - Guidance for certifying COVID-19 deaths - 2020-03-26](#)

Relevant information will be forwarded to care home administrators via Irene Sheppard’s team.

Please contact Eric Chi at eric.chi@fraserhealth.ca should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ken Dueck, Chair
Dr. Sandra Derkach
Dr. Larry Gustafson
Dr. Amber Jarvie
Dr. Ralph Jones
Dr. Brianna Noon
Dr. Anthony Tran