



## **North Okanagan Hospice Society's Response to COVID-19**

### **Update: July 10, 2020**

Hospice House in Vernon continues to operate at full capacity. We are working every day to continue to deliver high quality end of life care for the residents of the North Okanagan.

On June 30, 2020, the BC Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Officer announced that they are allowing visitations at long-term care and assisted-living sites, which includes the North Okanagan Hospice Society. We are pleased for families that we can enact this change to allow essential visits at Hospice House at this time.

### **What is an Essential Visit?**

Examples of essential visits include but are not limited to:

- Visits for compassionate care, including critical illness, palliative care, hospice care, end of life, and Medical Assistance in Dying.
- Visits paramount to the patient or client's physical care and mental well-being, including:
  - Assistance with feeding, mobility and personal care;
  - Communication assistance for persons with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments;
  - Assistance by designated representatives for persons with disabilities, including provision of emotional support;
  - Visits for supported decision making; and
- Existing registered volunteers providing the services described above
- Visits required to move belongings in or out of a resident's room

In keeping with the province's recommendations for social distancing, NOHS is limiting the number of visitors entering our building. We will work to accommodate resident and family needs as much as possible.

We are restricting essential visitors to 3 designated people per-resident per-day during the hours from 11 am to 2 pm or 4 pm to 7 pm. Visitors can still see our residents outside of these hours however, would need to be pre-arranged with our care staff.

Essential visitors can only access the building one at a time.

A visitor who is a child may be accompanied by one parent, guardian or family member.

Our Psych Social Care Worker will work with each resident and their families as to who the essential visitors will be.

### **Screening Visitors**

Entry points to our facility will be more limited than usual and our Facility Greeter volunteer or a care staff member will screen all visitors for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19 symptoms, prior to every visit.

If you have signs or symptoms of illness, or are in self-isolation or quarantine in accordance with public health directives, you are not permitted to visit. Signs of illness may include fever, cough,

and shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, loss of sense of smell, loss of appetite, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fatigue, and muscle soreness.

If you feel even mildly unwell, please stay home and do not visit Hospice House until you are better.

All essential visitors entering Hospice House must wear a mask. Masks will be provided at our front entrance or visitors can bring their own.

When visiting, please practice safe physical-distancing with our care team. If the clinical team needs to provide care during your visit, please step aside and maintain safe physical distance or visitors may be asked to go out to the garden area.

### **Grief and Bereavement Services**

One on one grief and bereavement counselling sessions are available on Tuesday and Wednesdays to new and existing clients in our community. Arrangements can be made to do an on-line session or a client may come to Hospice House. Social distancing and additional safety protocols, such as screening upon entry, will be in place during on-site visits.

All bereavement groups and workshops are postponed indefinitely.

Phone messages are retrieved twice per week and you can expect a response within one to three business days. For more information or to request support, call 250-503-1800 ext. 200 and leave a message.

### **Other Restrictions**

There will be no tours of our residential care facility until further notice.

We have postponed the current volunteer training sessions. If you are interested in training as a volunteer, please contact Tanya Stilborn at [info@nohs.ca](mailto:info@nohs.ca) or visit our website [HERE](#) for more information.

Although we truly appreciate all the support of our communities for Hospice staff and residents, we kindly ask the public not to bring food or organize deliveries of food or other items (e.g. flowers) to Hospice House at this time.

### **Thank You**

Our team at NOHS is grateful with how gracious our community has been in this complex situation. We understand the importance of visits from family and friends and appreciate your support in helping to keep everyone safe.

*For other sources of information on COVID-19, you can visit:*

Interior Health Authority: <https://news.interiorhealth.ca/covid-19/>

BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus>

BC Ministry of Health: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>