



April 10, 2020

Dear Care Home Operator,

I know these are likely the most difficult times of your professional careers, I know they are for me. The challenges you are facing to keep residents and staff safe have never been greater. However, despite this, care homes throughout BC are responding with care and compassion and it appears we may be achieving some initial success with flattening the pandemic curve.

Measures that have been taken to restrict visitors and care workers, the revised outbreak protocols along with the ability to learn lessons from our first care home outbreak have all contributed to keeping the health care system from becoming overwhelmed by its response to COVID19. However, all of these measures increase the burden on operators as well as residents and their families and please be assured that this fact is recognized.

One of the consequences of the COVID restrictions has been the increased risk of isolation and loneliness of care home residents as their friends and family can no longer visit and staff are run off their feet more than usual. The government recently funded a new program Safe Seniors, Strong Communities, which may be able to assist with this.

The program is mainly focused on community dwelling seniors to ensure they can get groceries and medications, but it also offers virtual friendly visits and this may be of interest to your residents or their family members.

Any resident in your care home can call 2-1-1 between the hours of 0800-1900 daily and they will be able to register to receive a virtual “friendly visit”. 2-1-1 is active throughout BC and a staff or family member could call on a resident’s behalf. All that is required is for the resident to have a personal phone number.

Once they register with 2-1-1, the resident will be referred to the COVID19 hub community agency that is nearest to you and the resident will be matched with a volunteer, who will call them up and have a chat. This program is funded by the government but it is delivered by the United Way Better at Home program and all volunteers are screened through the provincial criminal record review for those working or volunteering with vulnerable adults or children.

I have attached to this letter some posters and postcards you may want to distribute throughout your care home.

Please know I am thinking of you, your staff and your residents during this incredibly difficult time. If there is anything you think my office can do to assist you, your staff or your residents, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isobel Mackenzie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Isobel Mackenzie
Seniors Advocate
Province of British Columbia

**COVID-19
IN BC**

**Helping seniors
stay safe.**

Be a part of it.

**Call 2-1-1 or
visit bc211.ca**

Safe Seniors, Strong Communities

Are you a senior who needs help?

Are you a volunteer who wants
to help seniors?

» Friendly phone calls and virtual visits

**If you can help, or if you need help,
call 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca today.**

**Better
at Home**



United Way helping seniors remain independent.



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www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca



Stay Informed Via These Resources:

www.gov.bc.ca/Covid-19 | www.bccdc.ca | 1-888-COVID19

Symptom Self-Assessment:

covid19.thrive.health

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Are you a senior who needs help?

Are you a volunteer who wants
to help seniors?

- » Grocery and prescription pick up
and drop off
- » Meal arrangement
- » Friendly phone calls and virtual visits

**If you can help, or if you need help,
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