

**To:** All Employees, Shannex Nursing Homes

**From:** Dana Power, Regional Director of Operations, Enhanced Care NS  
General Managers and Site Managers, Enhanced Care NS

**Date:** March 30, 2020

**Re:** **CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS: COVID-19 Regional Designated Care Areas Request for Staff**

With COVID-19 confirmed cases elsewhere across the country, we are seeing other nursing homes struggle to contain the spread of this virus from resident to resident. Shannex has explored three options for the management of residents with COVID-19 and this information is being shared with all staff because we need your help in determining which approach we can operationalize. The three options are as follows:

1. **In room isolation;**
2. **Site Level Designated Care Areas;**
3. **Regional Designated Care Areas:** In order to implement this approach, we need sufficient numbers of employees across the organization to self-identify as willing and able to work in regionalized centres to care for residents with COVID-19.

### 1. Isolation in Rooms:

Our current isolation strategy for confirmed cases of residents with COVID-19 is to isolate residents in their room and use full isolation precautions similar to any other outbreak. Our teams are trained on this and it has served us well over the years to contain spread of viral illnesses like influenza..

### 2. Site Level Designated Care Areas:

In this strategy, a Site Level Designated Care Area would establish one unit in each home designated for those with confirmed case of COVID-19. This will limit the spread through the home. All Designated Care Areas will be ground level access to the home with direct access to the outside through its own entrance so that staff and products can enter and exit the area directly from the outside to limit exposure inside the home. Staff will be scheduled and dedicated to the area for their full shift and they will not interact with other residents or employees who are outside the designated care area.

### 3. Regional Designated Care Areas:

In this strategy, Shannex would create three (3) Regional Designated Care Areas ("DCA") in Nova Scotia for residents that test positive with COVID-19. **We have had preliminary discussions with NSNU, NSGEU, CUPE and UNIFOR and have their support for employees to self identify for this at sites other than their home site.**

This strategy means that we are removing the risk of exposure across the home as soon as practically possible from each individual nursing home and cohorting residents with positive cases of COVID-19 in a Regional DCA. The DCA will be fully staffed with Shannex employees who are prepared and supported by a corporate team made up of operations, clinical, asset management, IT, HR, and infection control. We are currently working with EHS to confirm their ability move the residents safely from their home site to the DCA as needed

The three (3) regional DCA sites would located in the following homes:

1. Harbournstone Enhanced Care, Sydney;
2. Cedarstone Enhanced Care, Truro; and
3. Parkstone Enhanced Care, Halifax.

In addition, a local DCA will be maintained at Mary's Court in Antigonish to support the Sister's of St. Martha to remain in their home environment. Attached to this memo as Schedule A is a list of which homes would send residents to each DCA.

In order to move forward with this approach, we require staff who would be interested in working in a Regional DCA to self identify by signing up at their respective homes through their manager as soon as possible. Employees need to consider the criteria below. We understand this is a big decision but we

also know we have a lot employees who want to be part of this and take the best approach we can to protect our residents and other team members.

**Employee considerations for Self-identification to work in a Regional DCA:**

1. We are using an approach that relies on employees to self identify as wanting to work within the Regional DCA. If not enough employees self identify to safely staff the Regional DCAs, we will manage residents with positive cases of COVID-19 through: (1) Isolation in the resident room or (2) the Site Level Designated Care area outlined above.
2. For any staff member who self identifies to work in a Regional DCA, we will make available lodging, meals and scrubs. We will work with each employee to ensure that your basic needs are supported during this time. We would also accept receipts for up to \$125 per day for increased costs. We will assist you in completing these forms so making this decision does not cost you anything.
3. We will staff and schedule the Regional DCAs such that each employee will be assigned a rotation that runs about 6 weeks. At the end of the rotation, each employee will be scheduled off with pay for 80 hours (14 days) to ensure they are healthy and safe to return to their respective home site.
4. The Regional DCAs will be staffed with licensed / registered staff, front line care staff (CCAs), and a utility support worker who can assist with all non nursing functions including cleaning, movement of supplies, meals, etc. We must have licensed / registered staff on the Regional DCAs at all times. Staffing the Regional DCAs to full complement is the highest priority.
5. The screening or approval of staff will be conducted in consultation with the designated OHN/AS which consider:
  1. current screening guidelines for employees for clearance to work;
  2. low and high-risk factors for exposure to COVID-19;
  3. particular skills, experience, and qualifications; and
  4. seniority
6. The screening criteria will be objective, but will also be subject to change as new information is available from organizations such as the Public Health Agency of Canada and WHO, and in the event relevant directives are issued from any government agency with authority to issue directives.

In order to sign up for work within the Regional DCA please speak to your Site Manager or General Manager immediately as we are attempting to understand if we have enough staff to complete this strategy by Tuesday, March 31 at 9 PM.

Thank you in advance to all of our great employees for your consideration.