

memo



To: Agency-Wide/NACL Board of Directors
From: Graham Morry, Executive Director
Date: April 1, 2020
Re: CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 UPDATE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hi folks – with there now being 72 known cases of COVID-19 on Vancouver Island, NACL continues to prepare for the impact of COVID-19. To this effect, we have received the first installment of PPE deliveries, which are being distributed throughout the programs.

We currently have 3,000 surgical masks , 70 face shields (with 700 refills), 300 N-95 masks, 20 isolation gowns, 60 goggles, 50 face goggles, 300 booties, and a stock of hand sanitizer. More is on order, and will be distributed as needed.

Staffing-Related Contingencies

We still do not have a direct connection with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 infection, but are working under the assumption that it is only a matter of time. With that in mind, we have taken additional steps to ensure we have sufficient staffing, and have entered into an agreement with Clay Tree Society to share some of their staff who have volunteered to assist us in case of staff shortages. I would like to send out a heartfelt thank you to Clay Tree and its staff, who in my mind are demonstrating the embodiment of Community Living with this gesture. Our Deputy ED, Randy Humchitt, is overseeing this initiative if you have any questions.

I would also like to thank our local union executive for being so open and supportive as we go through this together. I really feel we're working as a team to achieve the best outcome possible.

The following is an excerpt from a CUPE 606 memo distributed yesterday:

Community Social Service Workers Can Work at Multiple CSS Worksites and for Multiple Employers

We know that the PHO, some Health Authorities and Community Care licensing have provided conflicting information to employers in the Community Social Services sector. Now we have clear direction.

If you work at a long-term care facility anywhere in BC, you cannot work at another long-term care facility anywhere else. These are facilities that provide care to the elderly and are, typically, funded by the Ministry of Health. This order was made by the PHO to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable seniors in long-term care. There are very few of these long-term care facilities in the Community Social Services Sector.

However, if you work at a long-term care facility, you are permitted to work at any other worksite in the Community Social Services sector or elsewhere. Other than the limitation on workers working at more than one long-term care facility, workers in the Community Social Services sector are free to work for multiple employers and to work at multiple sites. We know that some employers have been asking you for information about other employers that you work for or have been trying to compel you to select one employer. They cannot do this and must cease and desist from trying to limit your employment in any way, other than as mentioned above. If an Employer persists in asking you for this type of information, please contact your Steward or Union Representative for assistance immediately.

NACL supports this position in principle, and this is our current position in regard to people working in multiple locations; however, the base concept of social distancing is to minimize all points of contact – so, the more people you have contact with, the greater the risk of transmission. We have received some concern that we haven't implemented the one-program protocol, so would like to address this in a forthright manner.

We will continue to follow the PHO directives on this matter, but are preparing a contingency plan that will allow us to go to one-program only for staff. The reason we continue to support the multi-program practice is because we have serious concerns that if we do not have the ability to direct staff to where they are needed most (i.e. if a staff team gets hit hard and has to quarantine), we need the option to redeploy staff to that program. Of course, the flip side is that infected staff may have transmitted to other programs.

We would also need to address the need to ensure that employees are kept as financially whole as possible, and though a secondary matter (as safety is paramount), it is another consideration for us. It is due to these conflicting points that we are deferring to the PHO, as they are better suited to decide these matters based on the "greater community good" considerations. As always, I am interested to hear your views on this or any other approaches we are taking to manage this current crisis.

Employee Mental Health

Your mental health is just as important to us as your physical health during this time. Here are some resources that can support you during these challenging times:

LifeWorks Employee Assistance Plan

This service is confidential and free to all NACL employees. There are a variety of support models available, including flexible counselling methods (telephone, online, in-person). The website has many resources, and there is a smartphone app.

Phone: 1-866-331-6851
Website: lifeworks.com
User ID: health
Password: Support
App Store: LifeWorks

Vancouver Island Crisis Society

Crisis counselling is offered by telephone, chat, and text.

Phone: 1-888-494-3888
310 Mental Health Support: 310-6789
(no need to put “1” or “250” in front of number)

Crisis Text: 250-800-3806
(every evening from 1800-2200)

Website: vicrisis.ca

Internal NACL Supports

The NACL Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee is open to your feedback on what they can do to support your mental health during this time. Your ideas could shape any customized supports for NACL employees to promote your mental well-being (the employee-driven “Healthy Teams” training is a great example of this). We have been already researching local organizations and individuals who may be able to offer customized supports to NACL employees and Home Share Providers who may be struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic.

For worker representatives, contact:

Max Miles at 250-797-0383 or **Gina Tremayne at 250-927-4117**.

For employer representatives, contact:

Randy Humchitt at 250-802-3832 or **Peter Letts at 250-713-8713**.

Randy Humchitt has also made himself available to chat/debrief/laugh with/hold space for any employee/Home Share Provider who could use a listening ear (cell number as listed above).

COVID-19 and Child Care for Essential Service Workers

This information was provided by the Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA):

Following the provincial government’s recent designation of community social services as an essential service, employees working in the sector who have children up to the age of five will now have temporary priority access to child care placement. Essential service employees working to deliver critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic can now apply for urgent child care around BC through 38 community-based hubs known as Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres.

Employees can apply for placement by completing an application at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-parent>

...or by calling 1-888-338-6622 and selecting Option 4. After filling out the form, a representative from a corresponding CCRR centre will be in contact with available licensed child care options. As social services employees are considered “Tier 1,” they will have the highest priority in placement. Please note that while the matching service is free, child care fees will still apply. More details on this newly announced initiative is also available through this provincial news release:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020CFD0017-000599>

Union Increases

Union increases will come into effect as scheduled for April 1, 2020.

Person Centered Planning

It is understandable that individual’s plans and life goals will have changed in light of the current COVID-19 climate, with most everyone staying home and social distancing. Programs and services are focusing on health and safety for our staff, persons served, family, and friends – as well as community partners.

With that said, in these challenging times also comes opportunity in our Staffed Residential, Community Inclusion, and Employment Services...opportunity to look at a person’s life with them, look at their plan and re-evaluate...have those rich conversations with individuals at home, and via social media. It’s also an opportunity to look deeply with someone about our Person Centered “doing,” and continue to update plans and document.

We need to keep our eye on the planning process, and continue the development of good plans and goals into ShareVision.

Along with you, SRWs/PC1s/PC2s, and Program Managers, the Coaches Team and Coaches will be continuing to meet, learn, and help with embedding the thinking and the skills needed to further help you with learning and using the Person Centered Thinking skills. Barb Barry, our Person Centered Practices/Employment Services Manager, will help facilitate this process in conjunction with our Managers and staff teams.

In Conclusion...

Thank you once again for all you do, and we’re here to support you all the way. As always, feel free to call me anytime.

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