



MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST

From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director on behalf of Pandemic Team

Date: November 13th, 2020

Re: Revised Visiting information for individuals/ongoing awareness of mitigating risk
Please put in COVID-19 binders.

Good day all

On behalf of the Pandemic Team, I wish to express our **gratitude and thanks** for your efforts during these unprecedented times. Your continued work to keep yourselves and the people we support safe is a testament to what we have achieved these past almost 9 months. The Team continues to meet regularly to review local/provincial/country wide public health announcements, watch trends in cases reported, monitor our local area's case numbers as well as the province to ensure we are doing everything we can to stay informed and updated on what we need to know. We also work closely with our funder, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to follow any directives put out by them.

As you have likely seen through the news Thunder Bay's numbers have been on the increase over the last week. As a result of this increase, the Pandemic Committee wishes to implement a **temporary change** to ONW's visitor directives for families. All visits with family members whether in person going out or visiting outdoors will be **temporarily suspended effective November 16th**. We will review this directive on **November 30th**. We regret having to take this step but in speaking with some of our partner agencies, many are taking measures on a short-term basis to see if this helps to flatten the curve. These measures are temporary for now and we encourage visits to still occur over the phone or virtually until this directive is reviewed in 2 weeks' time.

As recommended by Public health, we know that thorough hand washing and hand sanitizing, proper coughing and sneezing etiquette, wearing a mask, cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, staying home if you experience any symptoms and social distancing continue to be our best defense. Where it might have felt okay to take your mask off in the administrative areas of ONW if you felt social distancing was possible in an office or meeting room, we now are recommending wearing a mask at all times, unless you are alone in your own office. New data out by Dr. Tam suggests that transmission is not just in droplet form but also through aerosol transmission.

Things change quickly when numbers of COVID-19 cases experience an increase. The Pandemic Team has been closely monitoring this all week. Keeping people we support out of public places unless for essential appointments continues to be recommended. For those not working in our congregate care settings, evaluating your interactions with the people supported as to whether virtual support can be

provided and if face to face is necessary, that you are doing everything you can to ensure risk is minimized.

Where we have **vacancies at locations in the organization, any visits to those areas will be temporarily put on hold until Nov. 30th and re-evaluated at that time. Any in person mandatory training booked over the next 2 weeks will also be temporarily suspended and re-evaluated.** We are expecting the province to implement some further restrictions, but our Pandemic Team wishes to take a pro-active approach and start to implement some of these minor changes to try and get ahead of any announcements. Our collective efforts to monitor what we are doing over the next 2 weeks and to watch our local numbers will determine next steps at the end of the month.

Should you have any questions about these changes, please reach out to your immediate supervisor, or another member of our management team.

Thanks for doing your part.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Eckensweiler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anna-Marie Eckensweiler