

MEMORANDUM



To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST

From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director

Date: April 14, 2020

Re: Updates/Fueling guidelines/PPE/Information COVID-19 binders

Good day all

This communication will provide a series of updates for your information and some new information.

1. Attached you will find some information we received from our Consultant with the **Public Services Health & Safety Association** on **refueling of vehicles**. We hope you will find this information not only helpful for the work you do for OPTIONS but also for your own personal needs.
2. Also attached is information on **PPE**; proper methods of applying and removing medical PPE. As mentioned in a number of my communications, we have PPE in the homes but also, we have a supply of masks, gloves, gowns and shields at the Administrative office. To ensure we have enough medical PPE we are keeping a supply at the office to ensure we have sufficient resources to provide our employees in the event we have to deal with a positive case of COVID-19. Should we have to address a positive case, the local Public Health Unit provides the guidance and steps to care for that individual and we will take our direction from them.
3. **Non-medical disposable masks**: these did not arrive as planned therefore, we are distributing to every employee a material mask that can be used as medical or non-medical. Instructions for washing of these masks from the Government of Canada site are also provided and these can be used as per my memo on April 9th regarding employees concerns of using masks for grocery shopping or in other public places where social distancing may be challenging.
4. **COVID-19 binders**; We have received lots of good feedback on all of the messaging we have been sending out. In the beginning, we had no idea how long this crisis would last nor did we realize it would become a pandemic that would shut down the world with state of emergencies being enacted. Our administrative employees have put together a "**COVID-19**" binder that is being distributed to all areas. While we have put the communication out to the locations and it can be found on our website, we felt that a binder that contained all the information in one place might be an easier way to find useful information. Any information coming out from management should be added to the binders when received. While we sometimes fax

information to get it out in a timely fashion, hard copies will always come to you as well for the binders.


5. **Social /Physical Distancing:** this terminology is being used in every shape and form to ensure that when possible, everyone is keeping 2 meters between yourself and another person. I have been told that employees are upset as you cannot do social/physical distancing when providing care.....this is absolutely correct. We are deemed an **essential service** and that requires us to provide care and contact with the individuals we support. When possible at mealtimes, watching T.V. etc. when there are opportunities to spread people out and practice social/physical distancing, that is recommended. But to hear comments that OPTIONS is ignoring social distancing when providing care, means that there is some misunderstanding about what care needs to be provided. Transferring of individuals to beds, tubs, wheelchairs, personal care etc. requires your direct support and PPE is provided in the homes should individuals be unwell and there is concern. This is no different now then at other times, that employees practice proper hygiene and techniques that are outlined in our policies.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST pandemic team meets daily to review all updates on programs and employees and to work with any new information that comes our way. All of our information is communicated to yourselves, your Union representatives, to non-union employees and to our Board of Directors. We are doing our best to keep up with all of the latest information and to provide whatever resources we have received. We heard the homes were struggling with finding hand sanitizer and paper toweling. We managed to obtain both and have distributed to the locations. We also found another supplier for hand sanitizer and have put in another order. We are also working on having several individuals assist with groceries to relieve the stress of this for a number of employees. More to come on this in the next week.

Please know that your health and safety and of the individuals we support is our primary focus right now.

We appreciate all that you continue to do for OPTIONS and the individuals we support. Keep up the great work as your efforts are keeping everyone well.

On behalf of the management team and the Pandemic team,



Anna-Marie Eckensweiler