



MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST

From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director

Date: March 13, 2020

Re: Information Sharing

Back in February, Suzanne Fiorito, Health and Safety Coordinator put out a memorandum to inform all employees of the Novel Coronavirus. At that time, it was declared as a public health emergency. Employees were reminded to review policies that OPTIONS has with respect to the prevention of Infection, routine practices for residential setting and Employee's responsibilities in the control of Infectious Diseases. As I am sure you are all well aware, the Coronavirus COVID 19 has now been declared a Pandemic.

While this news is concerning Canada has been better prepared than other countries in its approaches to handling this. At the time of writing this memorandum, there are no confirmed cases in Thunder Bay. OPTIONS supports individuals who are vulnerable to this outbreak however all literature on this coming out from the government and the Public Health Unit says that frequently cleaning hands with soap and water is your best defense.

OPTIONS has a Pandemic plan in place and we are meeting regularly to review our policies and processes. We promote inclusion in the community wherever possible but at this time given the recommendations that are currently being promoted we are recommending the following:

- Please limit all community engagements to what is absolutely necessary. **Staying away** from crowded areas where close proximity to others is recommended, like malls, theatres etc. Go for a walk rather than go to a bowling alley or to swimming or to a show. Attend medical and/or other appointments only as necessary.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water and use hand sanitizer when washing of hands is not available.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
- If you have travel planned, then please self-monitor for symptoms after travel.
- Visitors to the offices will be screened prior to entry. We suggest visitors to the homes be screened as well. (see attached questions)

- Meetings scheduled over the next couple of weeks should try to be conducted via conference call or other means rather than face to face meetings.
- Those employees who visit individuals supported in the community, like CRT, SIL, Home Share, CPS, Passport should be assessing each situation to determine if someone they are meeting has been ill, avoiding face to face contact if possible and if it is not possible, than practicing social distancing where possible to address the needs of the individuals.

We have attached some information to share. We are meeting regularly and will update regularly as we learn new information. Our continued practice of our policies should help to keep everyone healthy during this period of heightened awareness of the virus. These measures are temporary to help maintain healthy environments and to reduce the risk of exposing employees and individuals supported.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your direct supervisor.

Let's work together to keep everyone healthy!! We appreciate everyone's efforts.



Anna-Marie Eckensweiler



Screening questions to be asked at Administrative offices and homes during the time of heightened awareness to Coronavirus COVID 19.

Effective March 13, 2020

- 1. Have you travelled outside of Canada or been in close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) who has traveled outside of Canada, in the last 14 days?**

Yes No

- 2. Was the travel to China, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore or South Korea in the last 14 days?**

Yes No

- 3. Do you have a new or worsening cough?**

Yes No

- 4. Do you have a new onset of fever or chills?**

Yes No

If individuals answer yes to the first 2 questions, please tell them to call the Thunder Bay District Health Unit at 625-5900 and ask to speak to the public health nurse in the Infectious Disease program or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-000. Yes answers would prohibit the individual having access to our premises.