

Coronavirus COVID-19

2020-03-26

Update: 2020-04-03

Given the spread of coronavirus COVID-19 throughout the world and the gradual emergence of cases of infection in Québec, we wish to share some new information and instructions for private seniors' residences (PSRs).

This document updates the information and instructions on the same subject dated March 26, 2020, and incorporates those sent on March 21, 2020, concerning the main directives to be followed if probable or confirmed cases of the virus are detected in a private seniors' residence.

During the pandemic, the directives issued by the Ministère de la Santé et de Services sociaux (MSSS) and the provincial Public Health Director under the *Public Health Act* take precedence over all other directives.

The CISSS and CIUSSS have been asked to set up a communication mechanism with every residence in their territory, to assist them with their actions and answer their questions (Ref. 20-MS-02321).

Ministerial inspections and compliance assessment visits by Accreditation Canada are suspended until further notice.

Instructions for all categories of private seniors' residences

1. Make sure you follow these instructions:

- a. Ensure that residents understand the reasons for the directives issued by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the Provincial Public Health Director.
- b. Cancel all group activities in the PSR.
- c. Prohibit regular visits to the PSR, except for visits by:
 - i. clinical teams from the CISSS or the CIUSSS and outside home support service providers (e.g. social economy enterprises providing home assistance services) who must provide services required by a resident's state of health;
 - ii. teams responsible for PSR certification, which must ensure service quality and residents' safety;
 - iii. people who must visit a relative for humanitarian reasons (e.g. an end-of-life situation). The same applies to residents who must visit a relative for

the same reasons;

- iv. people who must carry out essential repairs and maintenance in the living unit, for safety reasons.

It is important to note that personal protective equipment is not required to provide services to residents who are not infected or who do not have symptoms. To maintain inventories, equipment should be kept solely for situations involving residents who are infected or who have symptoms.

- d. The MSSS has asked home support teams to review their work organization in order to reduce the number of people who visit each residence. Among other things, the teams have been asked to:
 - i. assign specific workers to each residence;
 - ii. continually reassess the services required by each user's health;
 - iii. work with the partners to ensure that care and services are provided by the smallest possible number of different people.
- e. Promote access to telephone calls and encourage the use of different communication technologies to maintain connections between residents and their relatives.
- f. Ask all residents to remain in their own residential units, except:
 - i. for supervised outings (walks) outside the PSR;
 - ii. to attend a medical or dental appointment that is required by their state of health;
 - iii. for small residences where the units comprise one room only and where residents share the bathroom;
 - iv. for units that house people with special needs (e.g. cognitive disorders).
- g. Apply the following measures in cases where the bathroom is shared by several residents:
 - i. A person who is under investigation should wear a procedural mask when moving between his or her room and the bathroom.
 - ii. Hands must be washed before leaving the room and immediately after using the toilet.
 - iii. If possible, disinfect the door handle, the flush handle and the faucet after using the toilet.

For supervised outings, residence operators are asked to introduce a mechanism to ensure compliance with the social distancing instructions issued by the Government (e.g. avoid public places, remain at least two metres from other people at all times, and avoid groups). For example, the operator may keep a register to manage entries and exits, identify specific places for walks or ask volunteers to provide oversight.

The PSR cannot refuse to allow a resident back into his or her rental unit after a medical appointment, outing or trip. A resident who returns to the PSR after a stay in hospital or a trip must undergo compulsory self-isolation for a period of 14 days and must not be in the presence of other residents. People who return from a medical appointment need not self-isolate.

A residence operator must continue to welcome new residents in accordance with current instructions. For example, a new resident coming from his or her home or from a hospital and who has no symptoms may move into his or her rental unit, but must self-isolate for a period of 14 days. Personal protective equipment is not required.

However, a new resident who is infected, is under investigation or exhibits new symptoms cannot move into his or her new rental unit, but must remain at home, with a relative, or be redirected to a quarantine facility. This directive also applies to every new resident coming from a hospital who has or develops symptoms of COVID-19. If the PSR has implemented hot zones and cold zones, in collaboration with the CISSS or CIUSSS, the measures agreed upon with the institution may be implemented in compliance with infection prevention and control.

Rental visits are prohibited in PSRs; virtual visits are preferred at this time.

- g. Delivery services are permitted. Residents' purchases must be left at the main entrance. Employees must comply with public health instructions when taking the purchases to the residents.

2. Make sure you comply with infection prevention and control measures, including the following:

- a. Ensure that everyone in the PSR applies basic infection prevention and control practices. For example, they must:
 - Wash their hands frequently, using warm running water and soap, for at least 20 seconds, or use a hydroalcoholic solution.
 - When coughing or sneezing, cover their nose and mouth with their arm to reduce the spread of germs.When using a tissue, throw it away as soon as possible and washing their hands immediately afterwards.
- Avoid direct contact (e.g. handshakes, hugs) when greeting people.

Please refer to the Guide to the Prevention of Infections in Private Seniors' Residences, which explains the basic practices to be applied at all times.

- b. If possible, provide hand hygiene stations at the entrance to the residence and in the cafeteria, with:
- Posters on how to wash hands.
 - Hydroalcoholic solution dispensers.
 - Tissues.
 - A recipient for used materials.
- c. If there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the PSR:
1. Make sure the resident in question remains in his or her rental unit.
 2. Immediately notify the institution.
 3. Inform it of the level of care required, if known.
 4. In collaboration with the institution, decide whether or not the person can remain in the PSR, depending on his or her situation:
 - a) The person may be able to **remain in the PSR** if he or she is able to comply with instructions and:
 - lives alone and can self-isolate in his or her apartment (meals in the apartment);
 - lives in an individual room and has exclusive access to his or her own bathroom (meals in the room);
 - lives with other people but has an individual room and exclusive access to his or her own bathroom (meals in the room);
 - is **independent** and able to look after himself or herself, **OR the PSR has staff members** who are trained in infection prevention and control and are able to apply rigorous protection measures, including basic practices and wearing of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) when providing personal assistance.
 - b) The institution will recommend that the person should be **transferred to a quarantine facility, in a predetermined location**, for the entire quarantine period, if:
 - the person is not independent and cannot look after himself or herself **OR** the PSR does not have trained staff members who have access to PPE to provide the necessary assistance safely;

- the person is unable to comply strictly with the room confinement instructions (e.g. due to a neurocognitive disorder).

5. Apply the measures according to the person's situation and the instructions received from the institution.

d. If the person who is infected or under investigation remains in the PSR:

- The person must remain in his or her unit or, if sharing an apartment, in his or her individual room, using only his or her own bathroom.
- Meals must be delivered to the person's unit, along with any medications, at no additional cost.
- Home assistance services other than distribution of medication are suspended, unless otherwise decided by the institution.
- Telephone follow-up calls must be made regularly to verify the person's condition.
- Visits are not permitted, except for humanitarian reasons (e.g. end of life situation).
- Relatives may deliver goods or food, in accordance with the conditions set out in the instructions for all categories of PSRs.

Additional information for people who require assistance with activities of daily living:

- The institution will decide if the frequency of certain services can be reduced.
- Limit the number of staff members providing services to these people.
- Apply rigorous basic infection prevention and control practices, such as hand washing.
- All attendants and nursing staff providing care to these people must wear and dispose of PPE in accordance with the institution's instructions, for each visit to the person's unit.
- The infected person must wear a procedural mask while receiving care.
- If the person lives with other people:
 - He or she must wear a procedural mask when moving between the bathroom and his or her own room.
 - Hands must be washed before leaving the room and immediately after using the toilet.
 - If possible, the door handle, toilet flush handle and faucet must be disinfected after the toilet is used.

e. If the infected person is transferred to a quarantine or special care facility:

Use adapted transportation where possible, if protective equipment is available to transport the person. If not, or if the person's condition deteriorates, use an ambulance.

In a community quarantine facility for COVID-19

- Temporary convalescence-type residential facility
- For all care levels
- For the duration of the quarantine period
- Visits prohibited, except for humanitarian reasons (e.g. end of life situations).

In a COVID-19 hospital (critical or intensive care)

- Requires medical assessment before transportation to a hospital
- For people requiring care levels A and B (prolongation of life including specialized care, intubation and ventilation)
- Visits prohibited, except for humanitarian reasons (e.g. end of life situations)

f. Steps to follow when a person returns from hospital (regardless of the reason for hospitalization):

- Plan the timing of the return, in collaboration with the person in charge of the PSR.
- Make sure the person washes his or her hands before entering the PSR.
- Make sure the person does not encounter other people when walking to his or her unit.
- Preventive self-isolation recommended for 14 days.

3. Services and activities offered by the residence

Services required for health-related reasons, to be maintained
Security services: Answer emergency calls at all times.
Nursing care: Continue to provide activities and care dispensed in the resident’s rental unit.
Personal assistance services (assistance with eating, hygiene, dressing and undressing, administration of medication, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to dispense all these services - Reduce the frequency of services that do not compromise the user’s safety or integrity.

<p>The following home assistance services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of medication - Maintenance of clothing and household linens: Washing only. Reduce the frequency while taking the residents' needs into account (e.g. more frequent washing for a resident who is incontinent or has few clothes)
<p>Meal services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to offer regular meals - Meals must be delivered to and eaten in the residents' rental units. If it is not possible for meals to be taken in the residents' units, the residents may go to the cafeteria. However, the PSR must reduce the cafeteria's capacity by 50% and, where possible, provide for several meal periods. Residents must be at least two metres away from other people at all times. - Tray delivery charges are not permitted during the COVID-19 crisis.
<p>Housekeeping in shared spaces.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 4 of the Guide to the Prevention of Infections in PSRs for advice on reducing contamination risks.</p>

Services and activities that are suspended until further notice
<p>The following home assistance services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All housekeeping services are suspended, unless interruption of the service would compromise the resident's safety or integrity, for example due to a risk of insalubrity (e.g. accumulation of garbage or dirty dishes, presence of animals, poor bathroom hygiene (toilet, washbasin, etc.).
<p>Outpatient care.</p>
<p>Leisure services.</p>
<p>Evacuation services.</p>
<p>Renovation and maintenance work not required for unit safety.</p>

4. Services and overtime in PSRs during the COVID-19 outbreak

It is suggested that PSRs should keep a register of costs incurred as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, especially costs relating to the hiring of additional resources, increased working hours, purchases of crisis management supplies and additional services such as tray delivery and supervision.

5. Services offered under agreements with your area's CISSS or CIUSSS

Contact the CISSS or CIUSSS concerned for information on the critical services that must be maintained.

6. Personnel and workers hired by residents

Follow INSPQ recommendations on self-isolation and end of self-isolation for health workers dealing with COVID-19: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2904-levee-isolement-travailleurs-covid19>.

Follow the recommendations for assessing the exposure risk for health workers from confirmed cases: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2905-evaluationrisque-travailleurs-covid19>.

7. Additional labour needs

If labour issues are encountered, contact the Human Resources Department of your region's CISSS or CIUSSS for assistance.

8. Access to childcare services

PSR employees are considered to be essential workers and therefore have access to childcare services in accordance with the terms set out on the website of the Ministère de la Famille:

<https://www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/services-de-gardedurgence/>

9. Other important information

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux is currently working with different partners to identify solutions that could be proposed and applied to help PSRs and residents apply the current instructions concerning quarantine, supervision and the provision of additional services in connection with COVID-19.

10. Useful references

Québec.ca website: <https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/#c46383>

If you have questions or concerns, call 1 877 644-4545 (toll-free).