

CIRCULAR

Date: April 8, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID#: 2020-52

To: Residential care facilities, group homes, foster homes, treatment centres and emergency shelters

Subject: **Information Pertaining to COVID19**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

Topic: Visitors to residential care facilities, group homes, foster homes, treatment centers and emergency shelters

All in-person visits - including family visits - to these locations, are suspended to reduce the risk of exposure of residents and children in care to COVID-19.

In exceptional circumstances, only one person at a time may visit a facility or home if the visitor is considered to be absolutely essential for the best interests of maintaining a resident's or child's mental health and well-being. Essential visitors may include family members, friends or companions who can uniquely provide comfort to the resident or child.

Visitor exceptions must be reviewed and approved as "essential" by the facility on a case-by-case basis. Foster parents and home share providers should check with their agency or department contact for direction on these decisions.

Essential visitors must undergo risk assessment screening by staff at the facility, agency or department. Visitors who have cold or flu symptoms, or have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, or who have traveled outside of Manitoba within the last 14 days, **must not** enter the facility or home. Essential visitors allowed entry must wash their hands when entering and leaving, and more frequently if appropriate, and follow respiratory etiquette by coughing or sneezing into their sleeve or a tissue.

Children are not allowed as essential visitors.

These measures, while necessary to protect residents, children and staff, may be difficult to implement. Facilities should encourage family, friends and support networks to communicate by telephone, Skype, or window visits.

All screening for suspected cases of the virus are be referred to Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257. A self-assessment tool and the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 can be found at www.manitoba.ca/covid19.

If you have any other questions, please contact your organization or agency and seek guidance.

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