



December 29, 2021

## **Re: COVID-19 Protocol Changes and Update**

Dear Residents,

When I sent you the last COVID update, less than two weeks ago, reminding you of our COVID-19 protocols, I had no idea that Alberta Health Services (AHS) would be sending us new protocols changes only days later.

The highly transmissible Omicron variant of COVID-19 is definitely on the rise with Alberta reporting now that about one in three people being tested is testing positive. With this new variant so transmissible, Shalem is vulnerable with one of its Residents or staff getting COVID, perhaps now more than ever.

I remain grateful that so many of our Residents (and all of our staff) are fully vaccinated, many with the additional booster. Vaccinations are still proving to keep severe symptoms at bay so if you are not vaccinated, please reconsider getting vaccinated if there is no medical reason why you cannot. And for those that have not yet received the third booster, please make your appointment!

As we continue to monitor the situation, we are taking additional action to protect Shalem by increasing safety measures as directed by AHS.

Effectively immediately, the following protocols will be in place:

### **Resident Absences Greater Than 24 hours/Close Contact**

- All Residents returning from absences of greater than 24 hours (including hospital stays) must report these absences to the Front Desk (by yourself or a family member/emergency contact). Upon return from the absence Residents must:
  - Receive an active screening questionnaire for 14 days facilitated by front desk staff; and

- Wear a mask for 14 days while in common areas, except when eating or drinking.
- Should a Resident come in direct contact with a person that is a confirmed or probable case for COVID-19 they must:
  - Take a rapid test, available at the Front Desk, on days 1, 3 and 7 after being exposed. Testing must be done by the Resident or their Responsible Party with results reported to the Front Desk. If a test result is positive, Residents must isolate themselves immediately and contact management for further steps.
  - *If vaccinated*, wear a mask for 14 days while in common areas, except when eating or drinking (those who eat in the Dining Room will be seated at their own table)
  - *If unvaccinated (not the full two doses)*, remain quarantined in their suite for 14 days

### **Visitor Protocols**

- All guests, service providers, volunteers, and delivery services must enter through the Haven entrance. Visitors ages 12 and above will only be permitted to enter Shalem if they provide proof of double vaccinations along with personal identification. Only those providing proof of medical exceptions will be exempt from this protocol.
- Visitors and volunteers, regardless of vaccination status, will not be permitted to enter Shalem for 14 days, following the close contact with any known or probably case of COVID-19.
- All visitors entering Shalem will receive a health questionnaire at the Front Desk.
- Masking of visitors will be mandatory in all common spaces and Haven suites.
- No cloth or homemade masks will be permitted. Visitors will be permitted to wear a KN-95 mask they provide. Otherwise, a clean surgical mask will be provided upon arrival to all visitors by Front Desk personnel.

- Visits with visitors may only occur within Resident suites or booked common activity room.
- For all social visits held at Shalem, whether in your suite or a common activity room, please align the number of guests with restrictions set by the province.
- We encourage Residents to ensure that any children visiting Shalem between the ages of 5 and 12 are vaccinated. At this time, this will not be monitored or checked at the Front Desk.
- Allowances for guests to join Residents in the Dining Room will be temporarily suspended. As well, guests will not be permitted to join in any Resident activities.
- We ask that Residents do not let anyone into the buildings through a door other than the Haven entrance, including deliveries. If you have a delivery either meet the delivery person at the door or direct them to the Haven entrance for them to following necessary visitor protocols.
- If you receive care services (housecleaning, home care etc.) from any individual not vaccinated, please make alternative arrangements until the vaccination requirement is no longer required.

### **Masking for Residents**

- Masking will be required in common areas of all Residents returning from an absence of greater than 24 hours or those Residents who have been in close contact with a confirmed or probably test of COVID-19.
- Masking will be required at group activities.
- We strongly encourage all Residents to wear surgical or KN-95 masks (rather than cloth or homemade masks) outside of their suites.
- Upon request, surgical masks will be available to Residents at the Front Desk.



## Resident Activities

Our staff have been working hard at planning many activities (including some new initiatives!) for our Residents, however, after some deliberation and with much regret, we have decided to adjust the planned activities:

- Resident activities that involve food and drink will be temporarily cancelled for January.
- For all other events, masking will be required.

Thank you for following these protocols. Please also continue to follow the general guidelines on hand hygiene and staying in your suite when you are feeling unwell.

We will continue to work to put details in place in anticipation that full activities can once again resume soon!

## Great is His Faithfulness

We have come so far together! Please join me and our staff in preserving a bit longer. And please continue to pray fervently that COVID-19 remains outside the doors of Shalem!

I, along with our staff, covet your prayers, as we work to set and implement these protocols. Know that we have not made these decisions lightly. Please pray for wisdom and grace for each one of us as we continue to serve you!

**'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness'**

*Lamentations 3:22-23*

With much love and admiration for all of you,



Dorothy de Vuyst  
Executive Director