

Hello Everyone,

March 16, 2020

In this difficult time, communication is very important. The situation in our community and in fact across the globe is changing rapidly. At ALSO our priority is the safety of the consumers we serve, our workers, our volunteers and all of our families. We want to keep each other safe and ensure that we reduce risk to our community.

I would like to update you on what is happening at ALSO.

- We have closed our Day Programs at Participation Industries and Chrysalis until further notice.
- We have restricted visitors at Monarch and Longfellow to essential visitors
- We are in the process of contacting all consumers to pare back to only essential service. This is partly due to a current and expected serious shortage of workers. It is primarily to reduce exposure to as few people as possible. This is to protect the health of our consumers and our staff.
- We are still allowing students from Social Work, Nursing and PSW programs to assist us. They are being screened as they attend at our sites.
- We are making Personal Protective Equipment available. We implore you to use the supplies as they are intended to be used. We do not have an infinite supply. We are in the process of ordering more gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, gowns, booties and eye and face protection. Please keep in mind that N95 masks will be supplied should someone we work with test positive for COVID-19. The earloop or surgical masks **should be worn by consumers** who have a fever or are coughing or sneezing. A worker with symptoms should not report to work or go home immediately. The earloop or surgical masks only stop the spread of droplets over distances. Staff should not be using the masks because they do not like a smell in a consumer's home or because they are allergic to pets. The masks will not protect you from allergens and we cannot afford to have them wasted.
- We are setting up a command centre at head office. This will be located in our boardroom. We will be monitoring consumers who may be ill. We will be monitoring our staff who are currently or will be in self-isolation by dates.
- We will be moving staff around as necessary to meet the needs of our community.
- We are in the process of setting up a hotline at 519-969-8188 ext 236 for questions, concerns or ideas related to COVID-19. We will ensure that you are all notified when this number is up, running, and personed from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm daily. We will extend the hours should the need arise.
- We do have a manager on call 24 hours per day 7 days per week. Our staff know how to make contact with that manager if required.

As you are aware, we support high acuity consumers. We want to ensure that we have the staff and professional services to meet their needs. Our focus will be on essential care. We will be asking everyone to cut back on shower routines, laundry, homemaking, meal preparation etc. Your Program Manager will be working with you to negotiate a temporary service plan that works for consumers, their families and our staff.

I want to commend our Program Managers, our Senior Management Team and our front line Attendant Service Workers and Facilitators. Many of you have worked well above the call of duty. You are responsible with attention to detail and most of all a deep concern for doing what is best for the consumers we serve and the community. I appreciate how well we are all working with a team spirit.

While these are challenging times, there are many stories out there of people acting with kindness and helping each other out. That is the true theme in this crisis. Practice social distancing but at the same time pull together!

Take Care of Each other,

Lynn