

Synopsis of Provincial Network meetings June 8th, 10th and 17th

The Provincial Network met three times over the past two weeks.

Note: Going forward, we will be meeting on a once weekly basis unless events warrant otherwise.

We continue to look at the overarching issues of the sector and provide a coordinated approach to providing information, resources and collaboration between our networks and government.

Our Key Priorities remain:

- Maintaining staff and morale:
 - Need essential worker status and to be treated like health and LTC staff, including access to childcare.
 - Critical to have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Funding to meet the needs due to the pandemic;
- Look several weeks out for potential trends and impacts on people, families and supports;
- Resources for people and families;
- Create and sustain clear channels of communication with MCCSS and the government's Emergency Operations Committee (EOC).

Here is some key information and outcomes from these meetings:

With regular ministry participation on our calls, they continue to hear, ask questions and bring forth our concerns to the Minister, and he in turn, to cabinet.

From Government/MCCSS:

- Staff testing, unless subject to an order of the local medical officer of health is voluntary. It was treated as such in LTC, therefore expect a similar approach as surveillance testing is done in DS. We anticipate that surveillance sampling in the sector is probably a week or two away, although some local community partnerships may activate opportunities sooner (e.g. some agencies have existing relationships / partnerships with hospitals who have chosen to work together on some broad sampling).
- Emergency Orders have been extended to June 30th and can be renewed on a 2-week rolling basis which MCCSS has no control over. When the declaration of the Emergency is lifted, there is an opportunity for some regulations to continue in certain circumstances where it is demonstrated to still be necessary.
- MCCSS is in discussions with other sectors around what the impact of the order is and a reasonable transition back to 'the new normal'. The decisions that Cabinet makes to extend orders is under much scrutiny and will need to be based on a solid amount of evidence.

Other Issues & Outcomes:

- Reopening Strategies – Updates, Trends, Cautions, Concerns:
 - During the transition to re-opening, priorities need to be on maintaining low infection risk to ensure health and wellness in congregate settings.
 - Planning for Changes in Emergency Order: Having predictability and advance notice in the ending of Emergency Orders is needed (30 days preferable).
 - DS has on-going risks that will extend past the immediate emergency period. Having some long-term standards in place would be beneficial.
 - Potential for mixed-messaging and managing expectations may be challenging for awhile due to phased re-opening and multiple public health units across the province.
- EOC Update: Still experiencing differences in Public Health units and how they respond. This continues to be raised at the EOC.
 - MCCSS is interested in hearing from us about how much PPE is needed and burn rates.
- Precarious Employment: OASIS questionnaire results will assist to define the ‘precarious employment’ items going forward.
- Make inquiries to Health on Data they are collecting and how we can use this info to expand our understanding of the broader DS experience that includes people living at home with their families and beyond the DS Residential Settings.
- Health/Medical/Infection expertise and the DS Sector: Need to look at building relationships with Health, Community Nursing Initiatives, etc. to explore building in-house and/or partnerships/expertise around this.
- Emerging Issue: The new requirement that families need to be tested with negative test results to visit family members.
 - There is much concern around this. There will likely be a great deal of push back from families as this is inconsistent from what is required from employees. In the best-case scenario, families will make noise on the issue. Some organization’s have already had families visiting; therefore, this would be moving backwards.

Stay strong, Stay Healthy, Stay connected.

The Provincial Network.