

## NH Regional Guidance for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Essential Visits for Compassionate Care

Northern Health continues to work with provincial and federal partners on surveillance, diagnostic testing and infection control measures for the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, visitor restrictions are in place to protect patients, residents, staff, and families. We are ensuring these restrictions are employed with compassion.

Fundamental to good end of life care, is the support offered to allow families and loved ones to be together. This is complicated in the context of the COVID-19 response; however, the fundamentals of good end of life care remain just as important.

Northern Health continues to allow essential visits to our facilities. Essential visits include visits for compassionate care for end of life and during critical illness. End of life visits are restricted to patients who are expected to pass within hours or days. Visits as described above are appropriate if they are vital to the wellbeing of the patient and their family.

Visitation with patients who are at end of life is restricted to one healthy (asymptomatic for COVID-19) visitor at a time, but this may increase on a case-by-case basis. Visitors must follow direction from physicians and staff at all facilities in regards to the appropriate donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Visitors are not to spend time in common areas of the facility and are asked to exit the facility immediately after their visit.

Family may also choose to use technology when they are unable to visit in person. This may include the use of telephone calls or virtual visits using smartphones or tablets. Staff should support these practices.

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in a facility, the Medical Health Officer may further restrict access to facilities. If unsure about the appropriateness of visitation in compassionate care situations, please contact a member of the Palliative Care Consultation Team at 250-649-7606.