

Example of Long Term Care Letter:

(LTC HOME name) is always prepared for respiratory outbreaks and we have excellent infection and control procedures in place to deal with seasonal cold and flu symptoms. COVID-19 presents a significant challenge not only across the world, but also for long-term care homes throughout Canada.

We would like to take the opportunity to briefly identify what COVID-19 is and what can be done from a medical intervention perspective.

COVID-19 Definition (World Health Organization):

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19 (World Health Organization):

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

As you know (LTC name) has implemented many measures in our effort to prevent COVID-19 from entering our home. We greatly appreciate your support and understanding in this effort.

Even with all these measures, there is the possibility that at some point some residents may contract COVID-19.

There are a few salient points which you should be aware of, not to provoke anxiety, but to apprise you of the facts:

- supportive care is the mainstay of the medical treatment for COVID-19 and is often the best care for people who are frail, elderly or who have serious health problems
- supportive care can be provided effectively at the LTC home, by staff who know the resident, rather than by over-stretched staff in a hospital
- supportive care is active care that includes assistance with feeding, fever control, discomfort, cough, and breathing

- for those who go on to develop more severe illness and prognosis, rest assured we will provide palliative care including all medications that are able to provide comfort at the end of life.

As most of you recall, one of the topics of discussion in the care conferences for the resident is “goals of care” in which we discuss, in the clear light of day, what is most important to the person in the case of an acute illness. This might have included potential treatment directions and plans in the event of a serious illness. It is important for the residents and/or SDM to recall the expressed wishes and potential treatment plans discussed in previous care conferences. It is important at this time that we review and understand those wishes and treatment plans in the current situation we find ourselves in.

We are encouraging you to think about this and to reach out to discuss these issues in the next days and weeks. You might receive a call, as the SDM, over the next days and weeks to understand and refresh what is important, confirm the wishes that will help guide the support the care we will provide.

Questions to consider in preparation to share are:

- What do you understand about your family member’s health?
- What information do you need at this time?
- What do we need to understand to provide your family member with the best possible care?
- How can we support you?

If you would like to speak with the physician, please let the nurse on the unit know.

Thanking you once again.