

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2020

Visitor Restrictions – Riverside Health Care

Riverside is restricting visitor hours at all locations, including La Verendrye General Hospital, Emo Health Centre, Rainy River Health Centre and Rainycrest Long Term Care Home. Henry Gauthier, President & CEO noted, "We are implementing these restrictions organizational wide as part of an effort to further enhance safeguards to protect patients, residents, clients, staff and the public. Our team comprised of hospital, long term care and community service representatives is implementing timely precautions to mitigate risk posed by infectious diseases. We appreciate the support of patients, residents, clients, families and the public as we implement these temporary measures."

The Restrictions for all sites include:

- 11am - 7pm visiting hours.
- One visitor or support person per resident or patient at any time (compassionate exceptions will be considered).
- Long term care family supports will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Visitors and family members will be screened and must be healthy and without symptom of illness. Visitors and family members who have recently travelled internationally to countries that the Government of Canada includes in their 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel warnings will not be permitted to visit.

Although the risk of COVID-19 remains low in the Rainy River District, Riverside is taking preventative measures to help control the spread of respiratory illnesses. "Our primary concern is ensuring people remain healthy and safe," stated Julie Loveday, Vice President of Clinical Services & Chief Nursing Executive. "Limiting visitors to our hospitalized patients as well as those who accompany outpatients for procedure and emergency room visits will help keep all patients safe while in our care."

Riverside works hard to protect our communities through rigorous infection and prevention controls across our community services. David Black, Director of Community Service, shared, "We continue to adapt our approach to ensure we are fully prepared to address any infectious disease risks in the delivery of our services to the communities of the Rainy River District. We are taking additional precautions to ensure we can continue to serve our clients, while also protecting the health of our staff."

In addition to the robust screening and infection control procedures already in place, Riverside began implementing additional screening questions for visitors to all our facilities. These questions are related to cough, fever, breathing difficulties and previous travels. Rainycrest initiated enhanced screening measures earlier this week. The main viral organism of the current outbreak at Rainycrest has been identified as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV); a virus that may cause severe infection in adults with heart and lung disease, or in anyone with a weakened immune system. “We want to emphasize that this limited visitation is temporary and is solely for the well-being of those we are privileged to serve in our long-term care facilities, where our sole focus is to limit possible exposure.” added Vice President of Long-Term Care and Administrator Barbara Harten.

Gauthier noted “the COVID-19 situation is changing and we are adapting our preparedness to this fluid situation; recognizing such circumstances can be frustrating for the public because our approach today may have to change slightly tomorrow. We appreciate everyone’s understanding during this time.”

Riverside continues to urge you to wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, maintain good cough and sneeze etiquette (cough and sneeze into shoulder/upper arm, not your hands), stay home when sick and disinfect commonly-touched surfaces as well as refrain from touching unnecessary surfaces while in public.

If you are concerned that you may have COVID-19, Riverside recommends you contact the Northwestern Public Health Unit at 1-807-468-7109 or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000. They will evaluate and determine if you meet the guidelines for testing based on symptoms, travel and exposures. For further information regarding COVID-19, visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Henry Gauthier
President & Chief Executive Officer
Riverside Health Care

Reference:

Kathryn Pierroz - Communications Coordinator, Riverside Health Care, 807-274-3261 ext. 4525

Riverside Health Care is a fully accredited multi-site, multi-function health care system serving the residents of the Rainy River District. Riverside Health Care operates hospitals in Fort Frances, Emo and Rainy River, and Rainycrest Long-Term Care Home and La Verendrye Non Profit Supportive Housing in Fort Frances. Each community is also served by Riverside Community Counselling which provides mental health and addictions services, Community Support Services through Rainycrest and Riverside Valley Diabetes Education Centre which provides important chronic disease management programming. For more information, please visit riversidehealthcare.ca