

# BENNETT CENTRE ADAPTING TO PANDEMIC REALITIES

## LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY HELPING #KEEPSENIORSSAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

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As COVID-19 takes a major toll on long-term care homes around the province, Georgetown's Bennett Health Care Centre is doing everything possible to keep the virus out of its facility.

So far, the centre that's adjacent to the Georgetown Hospital has had no cases of coronavirus in its staff or residents, says executive director Soo Wong.

"The staff have been working around the clock to keep this home safe and clean," she said. "We're working very hard to stop this bug."

Along with additional cleaning measures, the non-profit centre that's governed by a volunteer board of directors is also stringently screening staff daily to ensure the virus isn't introduced into the facility.

"They get tested at the front door. The first thing we do is take their temperature," explained Wong.

After that, each staff member is asked a series of questions about any symptoms they may have or if they've been in contact with someone who has travelled.

Once they're given the

"We're Facetiming or Skyping every day. The recreation staff has been wonderful at keeping us in touch. We feel safe with her there."

- Jim Richards

all clear, they're provided with two surgical masks and a brown bag to put their mask in during breaks.

"These surgical masks are used everywhere in the home. You can't even go to the photocopier (without one)," said Wong. "If they need more than two masks, they can also get more."

The new normal for Bennett Centre staff includes daily COVID-19 briefings from Wong, who also joins senior management for a weekly teleconference with families of residents and weekly meetings with the board of directors.

The facility implemented its pandemic plan on March 8, when visitors were no longer allowed in the building. By March 26, it was decided that staff who work at more than one



Bennett Centre photo

Laura Haley Boudreau says she's passing the extra time in her room at the Bennett Centre with crossword puzzles and crocheting blankets.

facility can no longer do so to prevent potential spread of the virus.

"We were very clear that during this pandemic, staff has to choose loyalty," said Wong. "It's a safety issue

not just for the residents, but also the staff."

If coronavirus does find its way into the facility, she said they're ready to activate a plan and strict infection control protocol to pre-

vent the spread within the building.

"We're ready for that war," she said, noting the centre is fully stocked with ample protective gear and N95 masks.

"We can not be complacent."

Board chair Brian Clark added the measures could include locking down either the north or south wing of the building to protect residents.

The daily routine is currently looking a bit different for the facility's 66 residents, who are now eating meals in their rooms.

"I can't always go out of the room when I want to, but that's OK," said Laura Haley Boudreau, who's lived at the centre since 2014 and serves as president of the Bennett Village Resident Council. "The nurses are all good to me here and I love it. It's my home."

The 87-year old has enjoyed a couple window visits with her family so far, along with special phone calls, cards and gifts for her birthday on April 28.

She's been passing the time in her room with crossword puzzles and crocheting blankets.

"I'm on my 34th blanket," she said. "I have seven children and they all got a blanket, and my grandchildren all did too."

The Bennett Centre is also using video chat platforms to keep their residents in touch with loved ones.

"We're Facetiming or Skyping every day," said Jim Richards, whose 88-year-old mother Donna lives at the facility.

"The recreation staff has been wonderful at keeping us in touch. We feel safe with her there."



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