

April 25, 2020

Jennifer Gurke jgurke@palliativemanitoba.ca

Subject: RE: Visitation to Dying Individuals

Dear Ms. Gurke,

Thank you very much for your communication.

On behalf of Dr. Roussin and the entire Incident Command team, please know that we greatly respect the special requirements of palliative patients, their families and loved ones along with your role in supporting them.

We fully understand this is an unprecedented and difficult time for the people of our province and there are inherent challenges related to this global pandemic.

The COVID-19 provincial guidelines for visitation have been developed with the goal to balance the risk of viral spread with the human factor and need for compassion that is an innate part of our health care system. As such, each facility has been asked to develop and implement a process that will ensure families remain continuously informed on the status of their loved one. We will continue to advocate for this among the operational teams.

As well, sites are strongly encouraged to consider virtual visits with family as they approach end-of-life to provide a voice and visual connection. We appreciate this does not always feel like an adequate substitution for all cases.

From our perspective, end-of-life is not solely based on a scoring system such as Palliative Performance Score but must include the clinical input of members of the individual and family care team. The care team and facility leadership are responsible for considering each request and balancing the compassionate reasons for an exception with their ongoing responsibility to ensuring the health and well-being of other patients/residents and staff.

Thank you again for your communication and all that you do for palliative care in our province. We will continue to do our best to manage individual circumstances amidst this pandemic. We appreciate your support and advocacy.

Sincerely,
Lanette Siragusa