



*St. Jude's Anglican Home*  
*A legacy of caring since 1948*

810 West 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 2G7  
[www.stjudes.bc.ca](http://www.stjudes.bc.ca)

telephone: (604)874-3200  
fax: (604)874-3459

March 25, 2020

Dear family members,

We at St Jude's Care Home continue to take strict measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 coming to our home. The purpose of this letter is to let you know what the physicians at long-term care homes in Vancouver have been learning about COVID-19 infections in the elderly and to tell you about our plans in case any of our elders do get a COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19 is a virus that causes a wide range of illness, from being as mild as a common cold to causing respiratory (lung) failure and death. As you have no doubt heard, the illness is more likely to be fatal in elderly people, especially in those who already have other illnesses. However, even among elderly people living in care homes, many who become infected with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms and will recover.

The severity of an individual's COVID-19 infection has nothing to do with how early it is diagnosed, or medical treatments given in hospital. It is simply about how the virus affects their body specifically. Elderly people who get the infection will likely need medication to treat fever, possibly require assistance with eating and drinking, and some will need oxygen therapy. All these are services that can be provided in long-term care. These treatments are also best provided by staff who know them and in the familiar environment of their home, rather than in a hospital.

If these treatments are not enough, it means the elder has a very severe infection and they are not likely to survive. We have discussed this with hospital physicians, and they have told us that there is nothing else that can be offered in hospital that will improve survival in this situation. As of now, there are no antivirals being used for COVID-19 in Vancouver hospitals (although research is currently underway). The next step in treatment in hospital would be to put the patient on a ventilator, and this unfortunately has a dismal outcome for our elderly patients, particularly for this illness.

To be very clear, we are NOT withholding ventilators from frail elderly COVID-19 patients because we want to save ventilators for younger, healthier patients. We are protecting patients from harm and suffering that would truly be without any benefit.

What this means is that if your loved one does contract COVID-19, we will care for them and monitor their symptoms carefully. Your loved one's physician, along with other members of the care team, will work with you to ensure that their specific Goals of Care are clear and up to date. If they do develop severe disease in their lungs, we are fully prepared to treat them with comfort care. We have medications that can treat any symptoms that they may have, and we will do everything we can to make their passing as comfortable as possible.

Although VCH is strictly restricting visitors at this time to prevent COVID-19 from entering St Jude's, provisions will be made to accommodate family visiting patients who are dying, while ensuring that visiting family members are equipped to prevent transmission.

We know this is a frightening time for many of you, and we hope this information provides you some reassurance that the disease is perhaps a little less dangerous than you thought and that, if your loved one is one of the unfortunate who do succumb to it, we are prepared to keep them comfortable at end of life.

We will keep you informed of any major updates and will let you know if we do have any cases in St Jude's. If any elder does get COVID-19, their physician will be in touch with their family.

If you have any questions regarding your loved one in the meantime, please email Susan Harvey and either she or their physician will get back to you, depending on the information you require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Hammond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

Dr. Judith Hammond, CCFP (COE)  
Medical Coordinator  
St. Jude's Anglican Home