

## OUR RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) SPECIAL BULLETIN #50: DECEMBER 25, 2021 UPDATE FOR RESIDENTS, FAMILIES & VISITORS

### **Notice of Change to BSF COVID-19 Safe Visiting Policy Effective Immediately**

#### **Residents Returning from Outings (Greater than 24 Hours) Effective December 25:**

Effective immediately on **December 25, 2021**, all residents returning from an outing for an absence of greater than 24 hours\*\* (regardless of immunization status) **AND all asymptomatic fully immunized\* residents who have recently been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19** (whether contact tracing for exposure was on an outing or on site) are required to:

- Wear a surgical/procedure mask for 14 days while in common areas of the site (except when eating/drinking)
- Actively screen for symptoms daily
- Rapid test on days 1, 3 and 7 post-return to site

\* Quarantine requirements for asymptomatic residents who are not fully immunized who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 remain the same as current practices (as guided by AHS).

\*\* This applies effective immediately to all residents returning from an outing of greater than 24 hours. (It does not apply retrospectively to residents that may have returned from an outing over the past 14 days).

These restrictions are in accordance with the guidance for continuing care residents under the direction of Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Orders. Refer to: [www.alberta.ca/protecting-residents-at-congregate-care-facilities.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/protecting-residents-at-congregate-care-facilities.aspx)

On December 23, 2021, Alberta Health issued an updated CMOH Order for Continuing Care Operators in response to the rise of community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. The yet unknown challenges the Omicron variant will present to long-term care, licensed supportive living, and hospices, requires immediate action. Yesterday (December 24, 2021) BSF provided notice of COVID-19 Safe Visiting Policy changes to take effect on December 27, 2021. However, after further consideration of the significantly rising risk in the community, we are now providing notice of this change for residents returning from outings (greater than 24 hours) effective immediately today.

The change to rapid testing for non-immunized visitors remains effective from December 27, 2021, as previously notified.

#### **Visitor Rapid Testing Requirements Effective December 27:**

- Starting from December 27, 2021, BSF will require any visitor (aged 5 years and older) that is not fully immunized for COVID-19 to undertake a negative rapid test daily upon entry to a BSF site or provide valid proof of privately paid negative test completed within the past 24 hours.

#### **Other Important Reminders:**

- Any visitor that has had known close contact with a lab-confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days must not enter the site for 14 days from the last day of exposure, regardless of their immunization status.
- Visitors who are not fully immunized are strongly encouraged to reconsider their need to visit and attend to the resident onsite, indoors and in person and alternatives to in person visits include virtual visits and phone calls.
- It is strongly recommended that any visitors who are not fully immunized voluntarily consent to a daily rapid test upon entry to the site before it becomes mandatory daily starting from December 27 at BSF sites.
- All Albertans are asked to reduce their number of contacts by half, limit unrestricted activities where there is a high risk of transmission, and observe all public health measures over the holidays to help limit the spread. Refer to: [www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx).

#### **Together, we remain BSF Strong!**

We understand the Holiday Season is an important time for residents, families and loved ones. These changes consider minimizing the disruption for residents, families and loved ones, while managing the significantly increasing risk in the community in line with current CMOH Orders and enhanced public health restrictions and guidance for all Albertans. Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and understanding. We wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

The full BSF Safe Visiting Policy is available at: [www.BSF.ca/COVID19](http://www.BSF.ca/COVID19).