

Cowichan Hospice Infection Control Update – March 2023

Cowichan Hospice's infection control protocols continue to evolve in order to keep clients, volunteers and staff safe by following provincial Public Health Orders and Island Health policies for contracted service providers, and as always, to support treating each other with respect and kindness.

As COVID-19 vaccinations have become widely available to British Columbians, the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission and serious consequences has diminished. Despite this, we acknowledge that the virus will still circulate like other communicable diseases.

While wearing a mask in Community office is **now optional**, we are still asking staff and volunteers to:

- avoid being at the workplace when sick
- wash their hands regularly and to cover coughs and sneezes
- check in with your clients about mask wearing and follow their preference

We also continue to:

- require our Cowichan Hospice staff and volunteers to be fully vaccinated
- require you to indicate your flu vaccination status (if you work at Island Health sites)
- provide hand hygiene supplies and masks

Protocols for the Wellness Room:

- Due to the room size and proximity between clients and practitioners, masks will be worn in the Wellness Room but **may be removed** for the session **by mutual agreement**.
- When referring a client for Wellness sessions, the Coordinator will continue to inquire if the client is vaccinated for COVID. Those who are not vaccinated will only be scheduled with a Practitioner who has consented to provide service to unvaccinated clients.

Protocols for Palliative In-Home Support Volunteers:

Please have a mask with you, and check in with the family regarding preferred mask protocol.

Protocols for Island Health Facilities :

Volunteers working in an Island Health facility (Cowichan Hospice House, Cowichan District Hospital, Cairnsmore Place, Chemainus or Ladysmith Health Care Centers) **must show proof of vaccination to Island Health Volunteer Program staff** or follow the evolving protocol as it's updated.

Volunteers working at Island Health sites must also indicate their **flu vaccination status** to Cowichan Hospice each year by December 1. If you have not done so, please let Nigel know, whether or not you have been vaccinated for the flu, as we must keep a record of this also.