



September 30, 2020

1178172

Health Authority Vice Presidents of
Pandemic Planning

Re: 2020 Provincial General Election – Voting Considerations for Those in Acute Care, Long-term Care, or Assisted Living Facilities

As you are likely aware, a provincial election was called in B.C. on Monday, September 21, 2020. Voting is a constitutionally guaranteed right and is critical to a functioning democracy. Regardless of their health status, citizens who wish to exercise their right to vote should have the opportunity to do so.

Elections BC is a non-partisan office of the legislature and is responsible for administering provincial elections in British Columbia, ensuring that all voters have access to voting opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. In prior elections, voting teams have traditionally administered voting in ways shaped by the nature of each hospital/long-term care home/assisted living facility and its patients or residents to ensure voters with limited mobility or health challenges had an opportunity to vote.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, voting processes will be modified this year in order to include the preventive measures necessary to promote public health. Elections processes have been adapted to keep voters and election workers safe.

The information below and attached has been approved by both the Ministry of Health and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and is the required approach for voting in all acute care facilities, long-term care homes, and assisted living facilities in British Columbia.

Please find attached the voting processes document (“Voting by Scenario”) developed with input from the Ministry of Health in consultation with the PHO. Also attached is the request form (“Fill In 3003100”) that can be used for coordinated package requests from long-term care homes and assisted living facilities should operators wish to assist their residents to obtain mail in packages.

The Voting by Scenario document lays out arrangements for voting in care facilities and acute care hospitals under three scenarios: 1) non-pandemic conditions, 2) pandemic conditions and 3) in an outbreak scenario.

Under Pandemic Conditions – No Outbreak

For facilities operating under pandemic conditions with no outbreak, voting can be safely administered in much the same manner as has occurred in past elections. A team of Elections BC election officials can administer voting in the facility lobby and/or bed-to-bed, as required to meet the needs of facility residents or patients. Elections BC has a comprehensive Safe Voting Places – COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan (<https://elections.bc.ca/docs/SafeVotingPlacesPlan.pdf>) that has been developed in consultation with the Public Health Officer. Election officials will wear personal protective equipment and will follow all necessary protocols to ensure a safe voting environment for residents and patients. The Public Health Officer has clarified that the single-site directive does not apply to election officials working in care facilities. Thus, election official teams may visit more than one care facility.

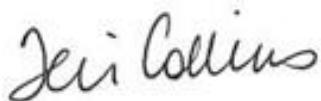
Under Pandemic Conditions – Outbreak

For facilities experiencing an outbreak during the election, the local District Electoral Officer will consult with the Medical Health Officer to develop a way to deliver voting that respects the nature and extent of the outbreak.

I would appreciate your assistance in communicating this guidance throughout the network of operators that fall within your jurisdiction. It is important that they know that the status quo in terms of voting arrangements, with the addition of a significant layer of new safety protocols, is acceptable in all facilities that are not experiencing a current outbreak.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the voting processes to be used in acute care, long-term care, or assisted living facilities this year, please contact your local District Electoral Officer.

Sincerely,



Teri Collins
Assistant Deputy Minister
Director of Licensing
Assisted Living Registrar

Attachments

pc: Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer
Anton Boegman, Chief Electoral Officer
Long-term Care Operators (via HA distribution)
Assisted Living Operators (via HA distribution)