



## Carefirst's Coping with COVID-19 Update Report #2 (Period April 16 to May 7, 2020)

### 1. Staffing of both Carefirst Seniors and Carefirst Family Health Team (FHT)

- Experienced increasing loss of PSWs from 30% to 35% since mid-April due to childcare issue and refusal to work
- Continue re-deployment of other program staff and drivers to support the new COVID-19 emergency community support programs
- Provided gift cards and started incentive payment of additional \$1 per hour for frontline RPNs, PSWs and home helpers of Carefirst Seniors as per the approval by the board started since April 16, 2020
- Federal government also announced on April 23, 2020 wage subsidy of \$4 per hour for the frontline healthcare workers for long-term care service settings, including long term care homes, retirement homes, and home and community care. Carefirst's incentive payment will cease Carefirst's incentive once the government wage subsidy kicks in.
- Registered with Ontario Health Force for recruitment of retired or foreign trained health care professionals to replenish the lost staff force. 3 candidates were referred to Carefirst but none agrees to work after learning the nature of work and compensation package.
- Transportation has been provided to PSWs to facilitate their PSW visits to the in-home clients. This transportation arrangement is very much appreciated by the PSWs.

### 2. Casualties due to COVID-19 at Carefirst

- Carefirst Seniors - No clients or employees reported to have tested COVID-19 positive during this report period
- Carefirst Family Health - 3 patients were tested COVID-19 positive recently in early May (one was a PSW who works in a long-term care home, the other two individuals contracted the virus from a tenant and a family member.)

### 3. Continuity of Operation of "Essential" Programs/Services and new COVID-19 emergency relief programs

- Continue a combination of in-person, people-face, and virtual care modality for the following services:

**a) Carefirst Family Health Team**

- Family Health Team's medical consultation, diagnosis, treatment, nursing, counselling, and chronic disease management and education services by telephone, video conferencing, and emails
- Each clinic in Richmond Hill and Scarborough sees 5 to 6 patients physically for more urgent issues per day after thorough pre-screenings
- Referred approx. 6 patients for COVID-19 tests, 3 tested positive (see section 2)
- Nurses provide 2<sup>nd</sup> round monitoring to 1,500 seniors patients with customized personal calls

**b) Carefirst Seniors**

- **For regular community support services**
  - i. Continues to have regular teleconference with LHINs re. weekly reporting on service status. So far, the LHINs have not indicated any funding cut and encourage service providers to do the right things to respond to community needs during this pandemic surge
  - ii. Has deployed the adult day program staff to Carefirst Transitional Care Unit and the COVID-19 emergency community relief program for support
- **For the New COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Program at Carefirst**
  - i. Since the introduction of Carefirst emergency hotline and the related relief programs from April 1, 2020, approx. 200 new clients have been served with a combination of support services, food service, medication deliver, transportation, and supportive counselling, etc.
  - ii. The referrals from the collaborative Ontario Health Teams' COVID-19 emergency response services remains to be low due to inadequate publicity of the program and the closure of many primary care clinics which are expected to make majority of the referrals.
  - iii. Has applied for some government emergency funding for a total of approx. \$55,000 to support expansion of the relief programs – meals-on-wheels program and virtual socialization program for the isolated seniors to increase their accessibility to the virtual care services.
  - iv. Carefirst Wellness Team has made efforts in working with different service departments to produce virtual Stream Live and pre-recorded videos on different topics, e.g. coping with stress, in different languages for the seniors population and their caregivers.
  - v. Carefirst receives increasing number of subscribers and viewers from weeks to weeks. Carefirst Youtube Channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHnfc1inbV0&t>  
Achieved very positive outcomes with over 28,000 views, a total of 4,000 view hours, 150 comments received, and 98% "likes".

#### **4. Special support services for hospitals/long-term care homes during COVID-19 surge**

##### **a) Transportation service for hospitals to provide surveillance service for long-term care homes**

Since April 18, 2020, Carefirst has transporting Scarborough Health Network (SHN)'s nursing teams to support the long-term care facilities, such as the Altamont Home and Extencicare Guildwood Home, in the Scarborough neighbourhood.

- For each service, Carefirst provides a shuttle bus to transport a team of 12 to 16 medical personnel per day to a designated LTC Home for medical support services, such as COVID-19 tests and IPAC support to the staff/residents of those facilities.
- To support SHN, Carefirst has and continues to provide full-day transportation to the SHN teams with our shuttle buses and drivers
- During and after each trip, Carefirst provides our drivers and cleaning staff with full PPE to ensure their health and safety
- During and after each trip, Carefirst's cleaning team provides deep cleaning and disinfecting the bus to ensure the health and safety of SHN's health care teams
- Carefirst anticipates SHN will require the transportation service on a regular basis as SHN may need to support at least 20 LTC Homes, which number does not include the retirement homes, in Scarborough
- Also, plans to collaborate with North York General Hospital/North York Toronto Health Partners in deploying Carefirst's mobile health unit for the setting up of a mobile primary care clinic in visiting the retirement homes in North York

##### **b) Transfers of hospitals' alternate level of care (ALC) patients to Carefirst Transitional Care Centre (TCC)**

- Continues to receive enquiries and referrals from hospitals – Sunnybrook, Markham Stouffville, North York General, and Scarborough Health Network for transfers of their ALC patients
- Fast burning of PPE supplies due to the admissions of these patients from the hospitals - For example, 150 disposable gowns are used per week for the staff in serving the residents in the isolation rooms, while it has been challenging to replenish the stockpile as most purchases are in back orders with the vendors.

##### **c) PPE stockpile at Carefirst**

- To ensure both Carefirst FHT and Carefirst Seniors have adequate PPE stock inventory (masks, gloves, gowns, and hand sanitizers) for at least 8-10 weeks. Carefirst is good for most items, except for disposable gowns due to fast consumption by Transitional Care Unit.

- To address the shortage of disposable gowns, Carefirst has started the making of 200 washable and reusable cloth gowns, which is more cost effective down the road.
- Carefirst continues to receive donations of surgical masks through the liaison of board members, City Councillors, MP, and community members.
- To protect the health and safety of our seniors, Carefirst has also started a cloth mask campaign for 10,000 cloth masks to be collected and given out free to the seniors/patients of both Carefirst Seniors and Carefirst Family Health Team. So far, over 3,000 cloth masks have been collected and given out to the patients on the integrated dialysis care, assisted living and home care clients.

Thank you all for your contributions in supporting our clients and patients through this challenging pandemic.

Helen Leung  
CEO, Carefirst