

PATHWAYS ABILITIES SOCIETY

POLICY: PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Applies to: All Personnel, Persons Served, Volunteers and Contractors

Original Approval Date: April 4, 2022

Date Board Approved: April 4, 2022

Replaces Policy Dated: Not Applicable

Board Member's Signature

PREAMBLE

Pathways Abilities Society is committed to ensure the health and safety of all individuals, employees, home share contractors and volunteers. In the event of a pandemic or epidemic, Pathways will follow any applicable legislation and guidance from health authorities first and will then provide direction on our response to this type of emergency. The following policy and procedures are in place to outline the specific steps that Pathways will take to safeguard employees' health and well-being during a pandemic while ensuring Pathways' ability to maintain essential operations and continue providing essential services. In addition, it provides guidance on how we intend to respond to specific operational and human resource issues in the event of a pandemic.

British Columbia Centre for Disease (BCCDC): "The BCCDC is the provincial reporting centre for reportable cases and categories of communicable diseases. The BCCDC provides provincial and national leadership in public health through surveillance, detection, prevention, and consultation. We provide direct diagnostic and treatment services to people with diseases of public health significance."

Pandemic: An event of disease, usually a novel disease, that is prevalent in the community, nationally or globally that seriously impairs or halts the operations of the society. Ongoing communication with Community Living BC, the BC Ministry of Health and other government sources will be required to seek guidance. These sources will direct the changes, modifications and/or discontinuation of our services.

Provincial Health Officer (PHO): The responsibilities of the PHO are outlined in the Public Health Act and they are responsible for providing independent advice to the Ministers and public officials on public health issues. They work with the BCCDC and British Columbia's Medical Health Officers to fulfill their legislated mandates on disease control and health protection.

World Health Organization (WHO): A United Nations agency that employs public health experts, including doctors, epidemiologists, scientists, and managers. The WHO

coordinates the world's response to health emergencies, promote well-being, prevent disease, and expand access to health care.

POLICY

Public Health tends to define pandemics based on phases:

- Phase 1: Low Risk – This may include a declaration of a global public health emergency by the WHO. There may or may not be cases in Canada. The focus is planning preventative measures to stop the spread of illness.

- Phase 2: Medium Risk – Continued methods used in phase 1 which may have additional requirements depending on guidelines provided. The WHO may have declared a global pandemic. There are confirmed cases in British Columbia.

- Phase 3: High Risk – There are confirmed cases in the Okanagan region.

Requirements used in phases 1 and 2 continue. Governments and health officials will be actively working to stop the spread of the contagious illness.

- Phase 4: Post-Pandemic – WHO will declare an end to the global pandemic. Illness levels will have dropped to acceptable levels. Cases may continue to occur. Actions to reduce risks of illness, such as vaccines and hand hygiene will still be stressed to reduce the risk from infection.

During phase 1, the Leadership Team will monitor the unfolding situation worldwide and strategize what supplies may be needed if the disease reaches our region. This includes sourcing relevant medical supply needs to decrease the chance of Pathways being unable to purchase supplies due to shortage and to obtain them before demand inflates their price. The Leadership Team will regularly monitor the information coming from WHO and local health authorities. For the duration of the pandemic, Pathways track what supplies we order and use so that we have them on hand when needed.

During phase 1, the Leadership Team will begin the development of procedures to guide our pandemic response. These procedures will be revised as needed or at least every three months throughout the course of the pandemic to keep our response measures appropriate according to evolving guidelines, restrictions, and mandates

If the health emergency escalates past phase 1, Pathways will ensure that all stakeholders are informed of our responses to the emergency including any government mandates or internally imposed restrictions that are made on all stakeholders. Pathways will monitor illness within the organization and inform relevant government agencies and others who are deemed affected of the illness present. This will be documented in ShareVision.

Employees, persons served, volunteers and contractors will follow all requirements, procedures and protocols imposed by Pathways or the PHO during the emergency. If restrictions also include guidelines advised by Provincial or Federal agencies such as bans on travel, employees are expected to follow these as well or return to work when guidelines or restrictions advise.

Pathways may alter services to accommodate provincial and federal guidelines and mandates which may include extra monitoring and documenting of health and wellbeing of employees and stakeholders. This may include but is not limited to having employees

work from home, closing other service areas to provide staffing for the homes, meeting virtually and completing home share monitoring visits virtually.

The Leadership Team will apply for any wage subsidy or sick pay available from the government for employees whose employment schedule is negatively impacted by illness. The Leadership Team will apply for any available grant or extra funding provided from the government because of the pandemic. Pathways will keep up to date with any policy and procedure changes that Community Living BC and Licensing because of the pandemic. Changes may include when to report critical incidents, mandates on vaccinations, etc.

Pathways will put into place infection control measures which may vary depending on the pathogen responsible for the pandemic. These may include but not exclusively be extra sanitization of surface areas and hands, barriers, masks, face shields, temperature checks and/or social distancing. Employees, persons served and volunteers will not attend any Pathways' service if they are displaying signs of illness.

As of the date this policy is approved, the following applies:

- Reinforcing, applying social or physical distancing, and universal precautions is required.
- Everyone who is able to must wear a mask. Masks must snugly fit around the face and cover your mouth and nose. Employees are not permitted to wear plastic visors unless they have communication issues.
- Employees must wear their mask at all times during personal care and while assisting individuals with their meal. Employees remove their masks and eat socially distanced.
- Employees transporting individuals in vehicles must wear masks. People receiving services who are able to wear a mask when being transported must wear a mask and windows must be rolled down a few inches while driving.
- Hands must be washed throughout the day especially before and after eating, using the bathroom and before and after supporting someone with personal care.
- Surfaces are continually sanitized daily including however not limited to table tops, chairs, light switches, door handles, bathrooms, taps, computer key boards, computer mice, photocopy machines, items used in activities, i.e. scissors, writing implements, sewing machines, bingo dabbers, etc.
- All interior doors that are able to remain open will remain open.
- Food and beverages will not be provided. Individuals and staff must bring their own drinks. Food containers will not be rinsed prior to being sent home.

Post pandemic, Pathways will discontinue policies and procedures that were put into place specifically for the pandemic. If items in the policies and procedures are going to be continued post pandemic, they will be added to other pre-existing policies and procedures. Or new policies and procedures will be created that are more relevant in the post pandemic phase.

The pandemic annual drill takes place in September.

This policy replaces the COVID 19 Pandemic Prevention at Service Sites.