

**Subject:** COVID-19 Updates - September 25, 2020 - Back to Basics 5 - Keeping our Teams Strong

**Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020 at 2:13:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time

**From:** Ernie Baatz

**To:** Ernie Baatz

## **Back to Basics Part 5 – Keeping our Teams Strong**

Today's "Back to Basics" update reviews some of the personnel practices that strengthen and support our teams of front line supporters. Everything we've reviewed so far – from health and safety to keeping people connected – depends on the skilled and consistent support of our front line staff and caregivers. Our service is our people.

### ***Smaller Teams***

Unlike long term care, in community living settings we are not required to have staff work in only one location. Nonetheless, we have reduced the number of settings where staff are working and the number of staff going into each home, to keep contacts to a minimum. About half of Spectrum staff have adjusted their work schedules to focus on fewer staff in each location. We are very grateful to all of them for their commitment to protecting themselves, their co-workers and the people they support.

- Ensuring continuity of employment and income for our front line supporters is a priority. If staff are displaced or have their hours reduced due to the needs of the home or program, we will work with them to find shifts with another team.
- HR will continue to review and approve any substantial changes to staff schedules.

### ***Relief Pool***

Keeping our teams strong means having ample relief staff to fill in when regular staff are off or when a position becomes vacant. Sometimes team members are able to cover for each other, which is great, but we want all staff to take appropriate time off to stay rested and avoid burnout. We need relief staff who can step in from time to time, to provide additional support to our teams.

- Spectrum managers are responsible for keeping the relief list up to date and working with HR to identify additional relief staff as needed.
- HR will continue to recruit and hire relief staff based on the needs of each team.

### ***Returning to Work***

Any time an employee has been off work for a period of time, they need to contact HR to confirm their return to work plans. Returning to work during a pandemic poses new challenges that we need to consider before welcoming team members back to work.

- Employees returning to Canada from international travel are required to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Employees who have been off sick may be asked for medical clearance to return to work.
- All employees are expected to read and follow the safety guidelines posted on the Spectrum website and any guidelines specific to their worksite. We need to ensure that any new or returning staff are aware of these guidelines, including training in the use of PPE.
- Staff schedules may need to be adjusted, as described above. Staff may not return to the same schedule of shifts they were working before their leave.
- HR will continue to oversee and approve any return to work plans.

### ***Employee and Family Assistance***

Our front line supporters are essential workers who have continued to show up every day through the pandemic to ensure that people stay healthy and safe. We can't thank them enough...but we can try!

- Priority one is to provide a safe work environment for all our front line supporters. This means ensuring they have appropriate training and materials to do their jobs safely. It means recognizing that staff, like everyone else, are feeling the stress of Covid-19 and dealing with their own health and family pressures. It means offering our support and understanding.
- We were pleased to be able to provide an enhancement to the caregiver fee for our contracted homeshare providers and hope to have the pandemic pay enhancement for staff very soon.
- The Sunlife EAP (Employee Assistance Plan) is available to employees receiving group benefits. For more information, please visit <https://www.workhealthlife.com/sunlife>
- For Home Share Providers, we also have an Assistance Plan called LifeWorks which has phone and internet access to support you and your family. For more information visit <https://login.lifeworks.com> or call **1-844-671-3327**.

On behalf of our Board and everyone at Spectrum, thank you to our front line supporters!

## **Voter Registration – Online Deadline is September 26, 2020**

[Register to vote](#) or update your information online or by phone before this date to help make voting faster and easier. You will still be able to register or update your information when you vote, but the voting process will take longer.

## **Vote By Mail Information**

During a pandemic, vote by mail is a good option for voters with underlying health conditions and for voters who do not wish to vote in person at a voting place.

**You can request a "Vote By Mail" package now**, so you are ready for the Fall provincial election on October 24th, 2020. On the [Elections BC website](#), the following information is required to request your package:

You will need to provide your name, date of birth, address, and one of the following identification numbers:

your B.C. driver's licence number,

your B.C. Identification Card number,

the last six digits of your Social Insurance Number, **or**

the last six digits of your Personal Health Number.

To request a vote-by-mail package, you will also be asked to provide an email address or telephone number where you can be reached.

Let us know if you have any questions or need any assistance.

**Ernie Baatz**

Executive Director

Spectrum Society for Community Living

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

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**Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe**