

## Kerry's Place Q & A on COVID-19

On Wednesday, March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.

### **What is different / what has changed now that the status has been elevated to pandemic?**

A pandemic is a worldwide spread of a new disease. In declaring COVID-19 a pandemic, WHO Director General, Dr. Tedros, states "we are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction." WHO emphasize that containment continues to be a top priority. We should continue to actively contain the transmission of the virus by implementing best practices in Infection Prevention and Control.

### **What are the common *symptoms* of COVID-19?**

- *Fever (38C/100F)*
- *Dry cough*
- *Shortness of breath in some cases*

At the moment, there is not a treatment or vaccine available for COVID-19. Thus, we have to be vigilant around our infection prevention and control practices.

### **What you can do to stay healthy and prevent transmission:**

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alternatively, an alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used when soap and water are not available.
- Carry alcohol based hand sanitizers when at outings and use frequently.
  - Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing as the virus is spread through the spray of small droplets from the nose and mouth of the person who coughs or sneezes.
  - Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose as contact of the virus on the hand can enter through those routes.
  - If you have a cough or sneeze, cover mouth with your arm (flexed elbow over mouth) or use a tissue and dispose.
  - Monitor yourself for illness, and stay home if you are sick.
  - Frequent cleaning and disinfecting touched objects and surfaces, such as doorknobs, will be important to prevent transmission, as it is yet unknown how long this virus can live on surfaces.

### **What precautions are being taken for persons supported in our homes?**

- We have pre-existing pandemic plans, both centralized for across Kerry's Place and at the Regional levels for specific local challenges. These fulsome plans are being reviewed and adapted based on the latest information as it becomes available.

### **Who is at most risk?**

- While the virus infects all ages, those at higher risk of severe case of COVID-19 infection include the elderly (over 60 years old) and those with underlying chronic conditions (including heart disease, diabetes, lung disease such as COPD, and cancer). About 80% of people who contract COVID-19 recover without needing special treatment, yet some can go on to develop severe disease.