*SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES*

I am writing to you as medical director of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  I hope all of you are keeping well during this stressful time. The world and local news is full of information around COVID 19 but I want to take a moment to reach out to you to discuss more specifically how we are preparing at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and how this could affect your loved one.  This is a difficult letter for me to write, and I know, a difficult letter for you to read.

In following public health and ministry guidelines, as you already know, we have had to stop having family and visitors into our residence.  As you are not there in person right now, please know that behind the scenes, our staff has been working tirelessly to have all contingencies and policies in place to avoid or mitigate an outbreak. One of these changes in process is that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are working remotely, and I alone will do any in-person site visits required during this pandemic, to limit potential outside exposures to your loved one.  Despite all of our precautions, an outbreak may still happen. Because of that very real possibility, I want to share with you what we know now about how COVID 19 can affect seniors and those with pre-existing health conditions.

COVID 19 is a viral illness that spreads like the flu.  We know it is particularly serious in seniors, especially for those who have other medical conditions.  If a senior does get sick from this virus, there is a much higher chance of dying from it, compared to a younger or healthier person.

The safest and most comfortable place for your loved one  to be cared for is in St Andrew’s. Doctors have learned that there is no benefit for seniors with COVID-19 to go to the hospital and they would not survive intensive care. As well, we have put in extra safe-guards to avoid transfers to ER for other non COVID-19 related illnesses as much as possible, to again try to lessen the potential for exposures.

We are preparing to care for any of our residents who become sick with CVID-19 in our care home.  We want you to know that our main priority is to ensure that your loved one is comfortable and cared for throughout their illness if they were to become sick.  Most symptoms are related to cough, fever and shortness of breath. Although there is no treatment for COVID 19, there are medicines and treatments for the symptoms that will be provided in the home and they will be provided with all fluids and nourishment for their comfort.  Our nurses are very skilled in providing comfort measures, and a COVID 19 illness would be no different in that regard.

We remain dedicated to our residents, your loved one.  My heart goes out to you during this distressing time. Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Dr Tracy Hughes