



January 27, 2021

Dear Revera Residents and Family Members,

This week, we passed the one-year anniversary of the very first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Canada. At that time, I don't think anyone imagined that a year later we would be at more than 753,000 cases and counting across the country. The advent of vaccines is offering hope for a world that is anxious to return to "normal," to living freely, with COVID-related quarantines, outbreaks, isolation and heartbreak behind us.

But this situation continues to evolve. Over the past few weeks, we are hearing more and more about new variants of the COVID-19 virus such as those from the United Kingdom and South Africa. These new variants seem to spread more easily, and researchers are monitoring closely to determine if they increase the severity of disease. We are starting to see cases of the UK variant in Canada, and it has crossed the threshold into long term care.

The news of a faster-spreading variant of COVID-19 is worrisome, especially to a population that is both wary and weary. That said, it is important that we keep this development in perspective. Here are a few facts that are helping me to do just that:

- **New variants are troubling, but not surprising** - It is expected with any virus that it will naturally develop genetic variations, or mutations, over time. The world's scientists are carefully monitoring the evolution of the virus, which helps us all understand and prepare.
- **Vaccination continues to be crucial** – The vaccines we have available appear to be effective against the new variants as well. Keeping our vulnerable populations safe relies on continuing the urgent drive to get everyone – residents and staff in long term care and retirement, frontline medical workers, other vulnerable populations, as well as the general public - vaccinated. When it's your turn, please roll up your sleeve.
- **Protocols to stop the spread remain the same** – Research indicates that the spread of these new variants is reduced by using the same infection and control precautions we have all come to rely upon. That means the focus on washing your hands, keeping your distance, wearing a mask, and practicing good respiratory hygiene when not wearing a mask doesn't change. We've gotten used to this – and it's now as important as ever.

Like you, I had hoped way back in January of 2020 when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed that this would all be over by now. While it's clearly not, I'm heartened by the progress that has been made, particularly the advent of vaccines. It is normal to feel anxiety when the pandemic throws another curveball at us, like new variants.



However, it's important that we continue to stay calm as we tackle this latest challenge. And we will – as we've done all through the pandemic – together.

Wash your hands, wear your mask and watch your distance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rhonda Collins
Chief Medical Officer, Revera Inc.