

To All Our Stakeholders:

Blue Heron Support Services has numerous policies and best practices in place to support the health and safety of the individuals we support, families and our employees.

We have implemented several additional safety measures since the world health organization declared a pandemic as a result of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) virus across the world. This virus is a significant risk for people who are vulnerable such as the elderly and those people with other health conditions.

At this point we can only anticipate how this will affect us in the long run and the situation is changing rapidly, however we do know that there are many things we can do now to best support the health of the individuals and families we work with and each other.

Blue Heron wants to ensure everyone gets the information they need from reliable sources. We are accessing the Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) websites for up to date information, and we are following their recommendations. Our first priority is to focus on keeping everyone safe through being diligent in our prevention practices. Each and every one of our employees has taken their responsibility seriously to do what we can to help prevent the spread of this virus.

Service organizations across the province are also being asked by the funders what plans and actions organizations have or are putting in place to address this issue. Blue Heron has overall health and safety policies and each program has an emergency response plan and a risk assessment and plan to address risks identified. We are also putting in place additional practices to address the COVID 19 virus issue. The following requirements have been put in place and are necessary to ensure we are doing all we can in the best interest of safety for individuals and staff:

- Support schedules have been altered to minimize social contact, the number of staff working with individuals and to create the least amount of disruption possible or to best support individuals through this time.
- All employees, individuals and families must be diligent at all times in following safety precautions including washing hands, limited social contact etc. For information on the practices of appropriate hand washing, social distancing etc. please see the AHS or CDC websites.
- All programs are regularly reviewing their emergency response plans and risk management plans and ensuring strategies are implemented.
- We are working to ensure individuals are supported to address any concerns they may have in regards to the virus and to ensure individuals are trained and are following the use of safety precautions as much as they are able to.
- Program Coordinators are keeping families and guardians aware of the safety precautions and practices that are in place to help prevent or contain any outbreak.
- All signs of illness of individuals or employees are being reported immediately and any necessary precautions implemented.
- The association has implemented a 14-day period of self-isolation period for any employee returning from out of country, any employee who shows signs of illness

- or any employee who has been in contact with anyone else returning from out of country or showing signs of illness.
- All employees on self-isolation must be symptom free before returning to work after the 14-day period.
 - The New to You thrift store is currently closed and will reopen once the crisis has passed.
 - As of March 20, 2020 the Administration office has been closed to the public. All program Team Leaders and Program Coordinators are working from their programs and home.
 - We have implemented the availability of a On-Call service as the emergency contact number 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Program Coordinators will be manning the on call service. I also am available at any time and have included my cell phone number below. Please still access the Team Leader for programs during the week however if you are unable to reach them or the Program Coordinator you can call the On-Call number for assistance. In addition, we have implemented contact numbers for both Human Resources and Technology supports for employees.
 - In the event that the pandemic creates a shortage of staff or limitations and directives are imposed by authorities, Blue Heron will need to implement practices to address these issues or demands. The association will take every consideration under review but may be required to make adjustments to things such as individuals schedules, staff schedules, amount of hours worked, programs or places staff work in, supports provided to individuals including the amount and type of support etc. These measures will be temporary until the crisis has passed, implemented in the best interest of all involved and to address safety concerns. Please note additional requirements may be implemented at any time and as the situation unfolds or changes.

Over my 30 years at Blue Heron I have seen many times that employees, individuals and families have come together as a team to do what was needed to address a problem or crisis and this is one of those times. I want to thank everyone for your support in helping keep everyone safe during this very challenging time. please don't hesitate to ask questions or reach out if you are in need of anything.

Diane Magill
Executive Director

- **Contact Numbers**
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- On-Call Supervisor/Emergency: Phone - 780-307-2842
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