

Cassellholme Family Council Meeting

Held by *Zoom*, North Bay, ON

Tuesday March 2nd, 2021

Welcome (2:00)

The Family Council met using *Zoom*. Blanche-Hélène Tremblay welcomed everyone. She informed the members that she will now be recording the meetings.

Attendance (12)

Bonnie Bolger, Michelle Breslin, Glenda Coleman, Karen Gooch (Recorder), Émilie Johnson, John Martin, Ann McIntyre, Monique Peters, Edith Prosser, Michelle Schmitt, Cathy Summers, Blanche-Hélène Tremblay (Chair)

Guests Jillian Duchesne (Staff Assistant), William Brooks (Director of Finance and IT)

Education

We welcomed William (Billy) Brooks, Director of Finance and IT who provided a *Power Point* presentation outlining how Cassellholme, which is a not-for-profit facility, is funded. This was originally presented at the last Board of Management meeting.

- Cassellholme has an operating budget of around \$16 million and how money is spent is highly controlled by the Ontario Government. The government provides \$185 per resident per day that is broken down as follows:
 - \$102.34 nursing per diem
 - \$12.06 programs and therapy (lost if not spent)
 - \$9.54 raw food (\$1 million per year spent, food bought in bulk)
 - \$56.01 dietary, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, admin (less resident copay)
- To account for residents with more complex needs the Case Mix Index (CMI) is applied where CMI=1=\$1. Cassellholme has had an increase in its CMI this year which has allowed for an increase in PSW staffing levels.
- The province has provided extra COVID funding to cover costs such as PPE and extra staffing. Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) is funded by the province and there is a municipal levy from North Bay and surrounding communities to top up the funding.
- The province has mandated an increase in the number of hours of hands-on care per day for each resident to 4 by 2025-2026. Cassellholme is over the current baseline for care and has set a target of providing 3 hours in 2022. The Cassellholme daily target for allied healthcare is 3.55 hours in 2022. (this includes nursing, physio and infection control) Estimates for these numbers are based on an occupancy of 240 residents but currently there less than 240 residents.
- The Cassellholme Foundation raises money to purchase items and equipment that will directly benefit the residents. The administration costs are very low and many staff members volunteer their time to work on this project.

Cassellholme Update

We received a report from Family Council's Staff Assistant, Jillian Duchesne:

- Communications – Cassellholme is trying to improve communication with family members and essential caregivers. During the outbreak there will be a daily post on the website with information and answers to questions sent in

to the following email address: questions@cassellholme.ca. Jillian has ensured that all Family Council members are now included on the Cassellholme email list.

There have been some technical problems with the phone system. On the weekends especially, it is difficult to get through to a real person. Staff is trying really hard to solve the issue.

Blanche-Hélène Tremblay was invited to bring updated information to Cassellholme to post on the Family Council bulletin board.

- Essential Caregivers – There will be a *Zoom* meeting on Friday March 5th with Cassellholme CEO Jamie Lowery to inform Essential Caregivers about the outbreak and what plans in place for reopening of the facility. A link will be sent out later in the week.

Agenda

Motion 005/21

Émilie Johnson/ Monique Peters moved the agenda be accepted as circulated.

Carried

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion 006/21

John Martin/ Monique Peters that the minutes from the February 2nd, 2021 meeting be approved as presented.

Carried

Business Arising

None

New Business

Cassellholme Outbreak

Appendix I

The rest of the meeting consisted mainly of a discussion about the Cassellholme outbreak and the lockout of Essential Caregivers.

- Information has come to light that appears to indicate that the current lockout of Essential Caregivers was initiated by Cassellholme and not the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU) as many had assumed. Blanche-Hélène Tremblay did an informal poll of those present at the meeting and everyone was in agreement that the lockout was an unnecessary step. In the event of an outbreak, the directive from the province states that a TLC facility must limit the number of visitors to one per resident but does not require that facilities lock out caregivers and other LTC facilities have not taken this step. Some have restricted access to isolation areas and some have allowed full visitation with strict health protocols. Cassellholme was declared to be in outbreak by the NBPSDHU since there was one visitor with a confirmed positive test.
- Blanche-Hélène Tremblay had a draft letter (Appendix I) prepared to send to Cassellholme, and they are obligated to reply to it. The letter was shared with everyone in order to get feedback. Before agreeing to send the letter, she asked members to consider the following questions:
 - Do we want Essential Caregivers let in?
 - Are we prepared for spread of COVID at Cassellholme?
 - Are we prepared to risk that someone other than a staff member would bring COVID into the facility?

- Would we be comfortable if your family member's roommate had a visitor?
- Since all the residents and all those who tested positive have now tested negative, why is the facility still closed to visitors? Several Family Council members have individually written or called to express their concern about the situation. There is very little information coming from Cassellholme about when the outbreak and lockout will be over.
- As stated in the letter, there are many benefits to having Essential Caregivers play an active role in caring for the residents. This must be balanced against the risk of not having them. Caregivers provide oversight during a time of staff shortages and will report risky situations. Having them present frees staff members to care for other residents. Residents face the risk of starvation and dehydration when caregivers are not there to help at meal times.
- The use of PPE and infection control measures can be taught to both staff and visitors. And there are reports of improper PPE use by both staff and visitors. There is no absolute guarantee that COVID will not be brought into the facility by either a staff member or visitor. Staff don't go home and isolate. They live their lives just as caregivers and so, do caregivers really pose a greater risk than staff? Do they care more about the residents than caregivers?
- Sending this letter fits into the larger effort of Family Council to improve long-term care in general. We all feel strongly that caregivers need to be part of this effort. Caregivers can help provide stability during a difficult time.
- Everyone agreed to send this letter and to copy it to Dr. Chirico at the NBPADHU.
- Members offered thanks to Blanche-Hélène for her work on this.

Board of Management Five members of Family Council attended the February 24th Board of Management meeting. This is a good way to let the management that we are interested and paying attention to what is happening at Cassellholme.

Other Business

Testing Several people have questions about the reliability of the testing. There are likely technical issues that are beyond anyone's control. It is hoped that Jamie Lowery will offer some wisdom about this at the *Zoom* meeting on Friday.

Ventilation Money has been allocated to upgrade the HVAC system in the west wing of the building which is good news during the pandemic.

400 Club Entrance There are plans in the works to separate the entrance near the 400 Club and hair salon from the rest of the building.

Next Meeting The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Blanche-Hélène Tremblay

Recorder, Karen Gooch

Appendix I

Cassellholme Family Council

Support - Communication - Education - Advocacy

Blanche-Hélène Tremblay, Chairperson, 52 Pargeter Drive, Astorville ON P0H 1B0

March 3, 2021

Mr. Jamie Lowery
Chief Executive Officer
Cassellholme East Nipissing District Home for the Aged
400 Olive Street
North Bay ON P1B 6J4

Re: **Health and Safety of Residents During Lockdown**

Dear Mr. Lowery,

We would like to bring your attention to the fact that preventing essential visitors from entering Cassellholme may be detrimental to the health and safety of all its residents. Cassellholme Family Council strongly recommends that essential visitors who meet the current requirements of Directive #3 immediately be given access to the home to care for their resident for the following reasons.

Lockdowns in long-term care have not proven to be an effective means of keeping residents safe when COVID is present in the community. Cases in LTC homes have risen and fallen according to the number of cases in the community, not according to whether or not homes were in lockdown. There is little or no added benefit to keeping essential visitors who are committed to the safety of their resident and the community out of LTC.

Essential family caregivers contribute to the health and safety of the residents in general in the following ways:

- They provide oversight in an environment where staff shortages are endemic so that potentially risky situations are reported on and acted upon immediately;
- They give care to their own resident, allowing staff to give more time to other residents.

When essential visitors are locked out, our residents face the risk of starvation, dehydration, skin breakdown and lack of stimulation which, arguably, are just as painful and deadly as COVID. Monitor essential visitors as you do staff, but let them into the home to care for their resident.

With power comes responsibility. We are prepared to do our part to ensure the health and safety of all of the residents of Cassellholme. The declaration of an outbreak at Cassellholme by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit has served as a powerful reminder that COVID and its variants may be present anywhere and anytime, even in a facility such as Cassellholme which exhibits a deep commitment to infection control.

Your earliest attention to this concern would be appreciated. For the health and safety of all residents, Cassellholme Family Council strongly recommends that essential visitors who meet the requirements of Directive #3 immediately be given access to the home to care for their resident. If the decision to lock out essential visitors was not made by Cassellholme, please let us know who made the decision so that we can contact them directly.

Sincerely,

Blanche-Hélène Tremblay

Blanche-Hélène Tremblay

Chairperson

Cc Dr Jim Chirico, Medical Officer of Health, Nipissing Parry Sound District Health Unit