



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
**Single positive case of COVID-19 confirmed in staff member at
Transition House shelter**

Northumberland, ON – April 28, 2021 – Transition House shelter is working closely with Northumberland County and the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) to implement outbreak management protocols following confirmation today that a staff member of the shelter has tested positive for COVID-19. Based on Ministry guidelines for congregate settings, this single positive case has prompted HKPRDHU to declare an outbreak at the shelter.

“Providing vital services and supports while keeping clients and staff safe has been our focus throughout the pandemic. In addition to maintaining the strict infection prevention and control measures that have been in place since the beginning of the pandemic, Transition House staff are now moving to implement outbreak management measures,” states Executive Director Anne Newman. “This includes pausing all new admissions to Transition House during the outbreak period, as we support the current ten clients to isolate in place.

“We are also partnering with Northumberland Paramedics to do immediate testing of clients and staff, and this testing will be repeated in ten days. HKPRDHU reports active outbreaks on its website at bit.ly/3gNPEm2, and it is expected that this outbreak will be reflected in updates to the site tomorrow. While the shelter is listed on this page, the outbreak is considered active.”

Transition House worked in close collaboration with the HKPRDHU at the beginning of the pandemic to establish a comprehensive infection prevention and control program at the shelter. This includes:

- Reduced capacity to ensure physical distancing in all sleeping quarters and common areas
- Screening of all new clients prior to entry to the shelter, and twice daily screening of all clients and staff for COVID-19 symptoms
- Enhanced environmental cleaning protocols
- Implementation of a universal mask policy, mandatory for staff and clients at all times, except when eating and, for clients, sleeping

In addition, recognizing that people experiencing homelessness often face barriers to accessing health care, on-site vaccination was coordinated for consenting staff and residents thanks to collaboration with local health care partners, further increasing safety among this vulnerable population.

“Our staff member who has tested positive is at home in self-isolation and we wish this individual a speedy recovery,” states Ms. Newman. “While this outbreak is concerning, we are working closely with the County and HKPRDHU to minimize risk. Our focus remains providing safe, dignified and supportive shelter services for people experiencing homelessness in our community.”

To ensure ongoing system-wide capacity during the pandemic despite a reduction in accommodations at Transition House shelter, overflow accommodations have been arranged with local motels. Community members experiencing homelessness can access shelter services through the coordinated entry system managed by Transition House. During the outbreak period, coordinated entry to the shelter system will be managed through telephone only. Residents in need of emergency shelter can contact 905-376-9562.

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For more information

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