AuthoraCare Collective’s COVID-19 Response

March 13, 2020

We know that you may be concerned about the spread of COVID-19 (commonly referred to as “Coronavirus”). AuthoraCare Collective is taking precautionary measures, following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has released guidelines for employers and businesses to contain the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

AuthoraCare’s number one priority is the health and safety of patients, patient families, volunteers, staff and the community. We are committed to being proactive as this public health issue evolves over the coming days, weeks and months.

Right now, our focus is prevention. We are taking precautionary measures, reinforcing our policies and procedures for contagious illnesses with staff and keeping abreast of the latest protocol released by the CDC. We have a corporate emergency response team in place to provide support to our care teams, especially in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Our Response

Staff Protocol

**Hygiene and infection control practices**

Our team is being encouraged to practice diligent personal hygiene and infection control practices, including but not limited to:

- Thorough handwashing for 20 seconds
- Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- “Social distancing” – the practice of keeping a distance of six or more feet away from others whenever possible and avoiding large groups
- Coughing/sneezing into elbows
- Refraining from touching the face
- Keeping our facilities clean and sanitary by wiping down communal surfaces frequently
- Staying home when sick, regardless of whether or not symptoms are consistent with the COVID-19 virus.
- Any staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be immediately removed from the office or field. We will then follow CDC protocol for potential cases.
- Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when coming into contact with patients as appropriate.

**Reduction or elimination of in-person meetings**

Our team is working hard to reschedule or cancel any in-person meetings. Technology is being used when appropriate to hold virtual meetings.
Reduction or elimination of travel
Staff are being encouraged to reconsider out-of-state travel plans. Staff returning from vacation in a high-risk area may need to participate in a 14-day quarantine. If an employee or someone who lives in their home has travelled outside of the country in the past month, they must disclose this information to HR.

Virus screening
Clinical team members involved in direct patient care will be screened for symptoms of the COVID-19 virus daily.

Patient Care
AuthoraCare Collective will continue to provide expert care throughout this public health event. This includes providing care to existing patients and accepting new referrals.

Hospice and Palliative Homecare
- Patients receiving care in their homes will continue to receive visits from their care team. In the event that their care schedule needs to be adjusted due to evolving COVID-19 protocols, they will be notified in advance by phone.
- Patients and their families are encouraged to practice diligent personal hygiene (see detailed recommendations in the “Staying Safe” section of this document).
- Patients and families who have recently traveled out-of-state or out-of-country are encouraged to notify their AuthoraCare team so that proper safety protocols can be implemented.

Hospice and Palliative Care in Long-Term Care Facilities
- AuthoraCare staff will comply with any and all protocols put into place by our partner facilities.
- In a case where a facility has personal hygiene or PPE standards that are less strict than AuthoraCare’s most current standards, staff will default to the more stringent practice.

Hospice and respite care in our inpatient facilities (The Hospice Home and Beacon Place)
- Visitors to our inpatient hospice facilities will be required to adhere to all screening protocols, including but not limited to hand sanitizing, a verbal questionnaire about recent travel and/or a verbal questionnaire about their current health (“do you feel sick”, etc.)
- Further screening protocols, including temperature screening, may be implemented at a future date.
- Visitors are encouraged to limit their visitation as much as is practical and possible while the COVID-19 virus remains a threat. AuthoraCare understands that families need to be able to visit with their dying loved ones, and therefore encourages visitors to practice good hygiene when in an inpatient facility.
Grief Support Services

**Adult Bereavement Counseling**
Clients receiving scheduled, ongoing bereavement counseling will be contacted by their counselor to make alternate counseling arrangements, which may include phone calls or Skype sessions. Face-to-face counseling sessions will be substituted for remote sessions whenever possible and until further notice.

**Support Groups**
AuthoraCare has canceled all support groups through the end of April. If there is an urgent need, support group attendees should contact AuthoraCare’s Grief Support center at 336.532.0100 (Burlington) or 336.621.5565 (Greensboro) about the possibility of making arrangements for virtual group meetings.

**Kids Path Counseling Services**
- Kids Path will continue to offer face-to-face counseling for children until further notice.
- Visitors to the Burlington or Greensboro campuses will be required to adhere to all screening protocols, including but not limited to hand sanitizing, a verbal questionnaire about recent travel and/or a verbal questionnaire about their current health (“do you feel sick”, etc.).
- Further screening protocols, including temperature screening, may be implemented at a future date.

**Meetings and Events**

**Scheduled Meetings**
- AuthoraCare staff are encouraged to reschedule, make virtual, or cancel any scheduled face-to-face meetings with external vendors until the end of April.
- In the event that a meeting cannot be rescheduled, made virtual, or canceled, visitors to the AuthoraCare campus will be subject to screening protocols.
- AuthoraCare staff are encouraged to reschedule, make virtual, or cancel internal meetings larger than three people.

**Events**
All AuthoraCare-sponsored events are canceled through the end of April, including but not limited to:
- Lunch & Learns
- Grief Support events, such as retreats
- Kids Path events, such as CHAMP Camp
- Volunteer Training Sessions

External vendors who are planning to have an event at The Lusk Center before the end of April are being contacted and offered the option of either rescheduling or canceling for a full refund.
Signs and Symptoms of the COVID-19 Coronavirus

- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Respiratory problems
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Lethargy

What you can do to be prepared

The CDC reinforces our infection control guidelines that include for you to:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Dispose of the tissue immediately.
- Handwashing: Use alcohol-based gel sanitizer or soap and water to wash hands for at least 20 seconds – especially after coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- If you are sick, avoid contact with others so that you do not spread the infection
- Keep a distance (6 ft when possible) from others when in crowded situations
- Limit your travel in your community if you are going somewhere you know someone else is ill or has traveled to a known affected area.

Please do not hesitate to call us at 336.621.2600 or another healthcare provider to ask questions. Visit the CDC website (cdc.gov) for an up-to-date hub of information regarding COVID-19.

We appreciate your patience and support as we continue to monitor this emerging public health event.

Kristen Wither Yntema
President and CEO

Juan-Carlos Monguilod, MD
Chief Medical Officer