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**From:** Seniors and Housing Information <Seniorsinformation@gov.ab.ca>  
**Sent:** May 01, 2020 6:36 PM  
**Cc:** Seniors and Housing Information  
**Subject:** Special Minister's Statement on COVID-19 - May 1, 2020

**Special Minister's Statement on COVID-19**

As we head into the month of May, it is hard to believe that less than two months ago, we were announcing the first case of COVID-19 in our province. I know this is not the spring we were looking forward to, and I encourage you not to lose hope.

Get outdoors, enjoy the sunshine, but please remember to do so safely. By continuing to exercise common sense and following public health guidance, we can prevent the spread of COVID-19 and get the economy moving again.

Below is a roundup of the important announcements and updates that may be of interest to you.

**Alberta's plan to relaunch**

A phased relaunch will put Albertans' safety first as we gradually reopen closed businesses and services and get people back to work. It is because Albertans have acted responsibly, respecting public health advice, that we have been able to limit the spread of COVID-19, keep localized outbreaks within the capacity of our health-care system, and now take the first incremental steps to reopen some businesses and services.

Throughout the relaunch we will maintain strong protections for the most vulnerable, including those in long-term care, continuing care and seniors' lodges. Details on the three-stage plan can be found [here](#).

**New and clarification of public health orders**

New public health orders have been put in place to help with the continued protection of residents in long-term care and supportive living, as well as to improve their quality of life. These include changes to visitation and outbreak policies. Details can be found [here](#).

**Rent relief**

Alberta has also joined other provinces, the territories and federal government in a [program to help small businesses pay rent](#). The new Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program will give certainty to small businesses – including non-profit and charitable organizations – by providing 50 per cent of monthly commercial rental costs. Further details on CECRA will be shared by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in the coming weeks when final terms and conditions are available.

The Government of Alberta has also deferred its planned rental assistance redesign and extended the current rent supplement programs for current recipients until December 2020.

**Support for vulnerable Albertans**

Vulnerable Albertans are getting the support they need during this unprecedented public health crisis. A [variety of efforts](#) are being made to support vulnerable and at-risk Albertans feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Government is prioritizing support for those who need it most, including people with disabilities, people accessing

income support programs, homeless and women's shelters, and civil society organizations that support Albertans, including food banks.

### **Family violence prevention**

Rates of family violence, including elder abuse, increase during and following natural disasters, public health crises and economic downturns.

The government is committed to supporting our most vulnerable and at-risk people, including those fleeing family violence. The requirement for in-person Emergency Protection Order (EPO) applications has been temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Provincial courts can now hear applications for EPOs via telecommunication. Some applicants may still be asked to appear in person. This change aligns with physical distancing guidelines set out by public health officials to keep people safe and healthy during this public health crisis. The ministerial order can be viewed [here](#).

It is important to know where to turn if you or someone you know is experiencing family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- A 24-hour Family Violence Information Line is available at 310-1818 to get anonymous help in more than 170 languages.
- Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence is available at 1-866-403-8000, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Information sheets and other resources on family violence prevention are available at [alberta.ca/COVID19](http://alberta.ca/COVID19).

I was pleased to join my colleagues from the ministries of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, Community and Social Services and Children's Services to issue a [joint statement](#) on continued support for those experiencing domestic and family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also released a video message, which you can watch [here](#).

### **Mental health supports**

Albertans can call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642 or the Addiction Help Line at 1-866-332-2322, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for confidential support, information and referrals.

It is important to remember during this time of uncertainty to stay connected with your loved ones. Please phone your family, friends and neighbours who are isolating.

### **Up-to-date information**

As the situation continues to evolve rapidly, I encourage you to visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](http://alberta.ca/COVID19) for the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 and details on the measures in place to help prevent the spread and support Albertans.

Thank you.

Josephine Pon  
Minister of Seniors and Housing

May 1, 2020

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