

## A more difficult Mother's (and Father's) Day

Traditionally, Mother's and Fathers' Day are occasions to gather with your family and honor those who brought you into the world and/or the people who provided love and support while you grow up. For some, like Dr Kristin Morrison, this day can also be one of the most challenging days of the year.

"My mother died almost 30 years ago from breast cancer and this year will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> Mother's Day without my daughter, Sara. This year, there will be many, many more people than there should be, who will be approaching Mother's and Father's Day with similar feelings of loss not gladness. My mother died surrounded by her friends and family. My daughter died unexpectedly, but there were still those who could touch and comfort her in her last moments. With COVID, even these comforts are often not available to the bereaved and grieving. During the first wave, my father had a heart attack, and he was on a ventilator for a week in ICU. Our only contact with him was a single daily 15 min video call. We were lucky and he recovered but many others have not."

As Medical Director of H J McFarland Memorial Home in Picton , Dr Anne Nancekievill has also experienced impacts that the pandemic and associated restrictions have had on residents and their families.

"Thanks to a combination of luck and the conscientious care of our dedicated staff, none of our local residents have died of COVID. Regardless, we are still seeing the effects, as families and residents continue to remain separated physically and emotionally. To hold one another, be able to touch a hand or even just share a smile. All those precious opportunities to connect with those we love are now restricted in a way we have never before experienced. Anyone with a family member in Long Term Care, a Retirement Home, or other congregate setting, has experienced this firsthand. Although most of our vulnerable residents are now vaccinated, many others are still at risk while this pandemic rages on. Many families will still be separated from those they love by the restrictions essential to also protect them."

With anti-lockdown sentiment and protests increasing, we want to remind people about the true cost of this pandemic. Over **8000 people – someone's** mother, father, or child - have died from COVID in Ontario this year, and many others because of it. People are becoming numb - like the tragedies we hear on TV - it is too far away and not real enough for many. Maybe it is time to make it a bit personal.

Please – this Mother's Day - remember all those who have lost someone to this pandemic. Remember the vulnerable in our community and the impact this has had on us all. Lockdown is not about taking away rights. It is about keeping those you love, safe, so they will be there with you when we can finally and safely be together! We need to end this pandemic. Vaccinations combined with current Public Health restrictions give us chance finally eliminate not just flatten the curve. A little more time, a little more patience and a little more compassion is all we need. Please stay safe, stay home and get vaccinated as soon as you can.

Drs Anne Nancekievill and Kristin Morrison

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