

CITY OF HAMILTON		POLICY UPDATED: April 3, 2023
DEPT: Healthy and Safe Communities		POLICY REVIEWED: April 3, 2023
DIVISION: Lodges		DATE OF ORIGIN: June 2020
MANUAL:		POLICY NO: DRAFT April 2023
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Visiting Residents during COVID-19 Pandemic

PURPOSE:

To follow the Ministry of Long-Term Care COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario, effective March 31, 2023, and any other associated directives or legislation. This policy includes protocols to maintain the highest of infection prevention and control (IPAC) standards within the Lodges and includes the following key elements:

- Screening prior to each visit for all visitors entering the Lodge
- Universal source mask for all visitors entering the Lodge
- Education for visitors entering the lodge on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices
- Guidance on responding to non-adherence by visitors in the Lodge, ending a visiting and temporarily prohibiting a visitor.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

There is an ongoing need to protect LTC home residents and staff from the risk of COVID-19. In addition, there are ongoing expectations regarding IPAC included in the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTCA) and Ontario Regulation 246/22.

Safety – Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, while ensuring risks are mitigated.

Emotional Well-Being – Welcoming visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

Equitable Access – All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

Flexibility – The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, staffing availability, the outbreak status of the home, and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE), are all variables considered in developing this policy.

Equality – Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

TYPES OF VISITORS:

LTC home staff, volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee.

Essential Visitors

Under Ontario Regulation (O. Reg) 246/22, an essential visitor is defined as:

- a) a caregiver,
- b) a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents,

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- c) a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care, or
- d) a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

Further under the O. Reg 246/22: "caregiver" means an individual who,

- a) is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,
- b) is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*,
- c) provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
- d) is designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and
- e) in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

General Visitors

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. This excludes children under the age of one.
- for social reasons that the resident, or their substitute decision-maker, assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity

DESIGNATION OF CAREGIVERS

- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:
 - a. resident's care needs that is reflected in the plan of care
 - b. availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent
- The designation, or any changes to the designation, should be made in writing to the home by the Resident and/or Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) to the Director of Nursing (DON) or designate.

VACCINATION STATUS

- All visitors are welcome to visit regardless of their COVID vaccination status.

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INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL INFORMATION/EDUCATION FOR VISITORS

1. Information sheets and posters are available at the Visitor Sign-In Log to emphasize importance of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

ACCESS TO THE LODGE AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS:

Macassa and Wentworth Lodge are operated as per direction of the Hamilton Public Health Unit. The public health unit may provide additional direction and or restrictions on the visitors to the home depending on the specific situation.

1. All visitors to the Lodge will follow public health measures i.e. screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and masking in common areas or any other areas where other residents or staff may be present. Additional Lodge direction with respect to isolation protocols or enhanced safety must be followed by all visitors.
2. All visitors are expected to complete the Visitor Log Sign-in on entry and exit. These logs will be maintained for 30 days and include all required information as per O. Reg 246/22.

SCREENING:

1. The screening requirements in MLTC Guidance Document apply to all essential visitors, caregivers and general visitors.
2. All visitors will self screen for symptoms and exposure history for COVID-19 prior to entering the home using signage posted at entrance.
3. Anyone showing symptoms of COVID -19 or having possible exposure to a person with COVID cannot enter the home and is advised to self isolate and seek advice on being tested for COVID- 19.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

1. All visitors must wear a medical mask on entry to the Lodge and in all common areas.
2. **Universal Masking:** All visitors must wear a mask provided by the Lodge for the entire duration of their visit while in common areas or in any spaces where other residents or staff may be present.
3. Exceptions to the masking requirements are as follows and outlined in COVID19 UNIVERSAL MASK & EYE PROTECTION POLICY(IC-04-10):
 - o Visitors can remove their masks when visiting in a resident room ONLY if there are no other residents or staff present
 - o Children who are younger than 2 years of age;
 - o Any individual who is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; and/or
 - o Any individual who is being reasonably accommodated in accordance with the Human Rights Code.
4. **Eye protection** is required for caregivers/essential visitors when they are: providing care to

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residents who are isolating due to suspected/confirmed COVID-19 case, providing direct care to residents within two meters in an outbreak area

5. The home will provide masks, gloves and gowns as required and provide guidance when it is required to wear all the above PPE

RESPONDING TO VISITOR NON-ADHERENCE:

Any non-adherence to this policy will be viewed as a risk to health and safety. Our response will be both specific and measured to ensure a clear understanding and compliance with the safeguards.

- a. Re-education and support for the visitor and a review of expectations completed. Should a visitor engage in repeated or flagrant non-adherence to the policy, a follow-up will be completed and documented by the Administrator or designate.
- b. Prohibiting a visitor from attending the Lodge will be a last resort response to non-adherence and signal a complete disregard of the policy by the visitor.

Ending a Visit

1. Homes may end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy, provided:
 - a. the home has explained the applicable requirement(s) to the visitor;
 - b. the visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) and,
 - c. the visitor has been given enough time to adhere to the requirement(s)
 - d. this will be documented in the resident(s) electronic health record by the Administrator or Designate.

Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor

1. Homes may temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home's visitor policy, subject to the mandatory prohibition in the Minister's Directive.
2. The following will be considered when determining the risk of the non-adherence behaviour:
 - a. Alignment with the requirements set out in the current COVID-19 Guidance document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario.
 - b. Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors and has been demonstrated consistently by the visitor over multiple visits
 - c. A previous history of visits being ended by the Home due to non-compliance
3. The decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor will be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted; stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition; clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed; and, will be documented by the Administrator or Designate in resident(s) electronic health record.

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APPENDIX 1 – Current Directives and Resources to guide policy

1. [COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes \(EN\)](#)
2. [Pandemic Response FAQs \(EN\)](#)



3. 20230322What-Residents-Can-Expect-03-