

<b>Healthy and Safe Communities Long Term Care</b>		
Infection Control Manual		Original Date: 2020/06/01
Policy No: IC-04-12		Date of Last Review: 2024/01/17
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## Visiting Residents during Pandemics, Seasonal Respiratory Illness or Outbreaks

<b>POLICY:</b>	<p>To follow current Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario, any other associated directives or legislation, and/or recommendations of Public Health. This policy includes protocols to maintain the highest infection prevention and control (IPAC) standards within the Lodges and includes the following key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Self-Screening prior to each visit to the Lodge,</li> <li>b) Mask requirements for visitors based on current recommendations form MLTC, Public Health or in response to a Lodge risk assessment by the licensee in consultation with Medical Director.</li> <li>d) Information for visitors on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices, and</li> <li>e) Guidance on responding to non-adherence by visitors in the Lodge, ending a visiting and temporarily prohibiting a visitor.</li> </ol>
<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES:</b>	<p><b>Safety</b> –Visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, while ensuring risks are mitigated.</p> <p><b>Emotional Well-Being</b> – Welcoming visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents.</p> <p><b>Equitable Access</b> – All residents are given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.</p> <p><b>Flexibility</b> – The physical infrastructure characteristics of the home, staffing availability, the outbreak status of the home, and the status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE), are all variables considered in developing this policy.</p> <p><b>Equality</b> – Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.</p>
<b>TYPES OF VISITORS:</b>	<p>LTC home staff, volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee.</p> <p><b><u>Essential Visitors</u></b></p> <p>Under Ontario Regulation (O. Reg) 246/22, an essential visitor is</p>

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	<p>defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a caregiver,</li> <li>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,</li> <li>c) a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care, or</li> <li>d) a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.</li> </ul> <p>Further, under the O. Reg 246/22 “caregiver” means an individual who,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,</li> <li>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 <i>Health Protection and Promotion Act</i>,</li> <li>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,</li> <li>d) is designated by the resident or the resident’s substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>General Visitors</u></b></p> <p>A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 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.</li> <li>b) 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.</li> </ul>
<b>DESIGNATION OF CAREGIVERS:</b>	<p>A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) resident's care needs that is reflected in the plan of care.</li> <li>b) availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.</li> </ul>

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	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.
<b>VACCINATION STATUS:</b>	All visitors are welcome to visit regardless of their COVID vaccination status.
<b>IPAC INFORMATION/ EDUCATION:</b>	Information is available at the Visitor Sign-In Log to highlight importance of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
<b>ACCESS TO THE LODGE AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<p>a) All visitors to the Lodge will follow public health measures i.e. self-screening, physical distancing, enhanced hand hygiene, and masking as shared through Lodge policies and communication.</p> <p>b) The Lodge reserves the right to implement and expect compliance with IPAC measures beyond any minimum standards established by MLTC or Public Health</p> <p>c) 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.</p> <p><b><u>SCREENING</u></b></p> <p>All visitors will self-screen for infection or illness, or exposure to COVID prior to fully entering the home using signage posted at entrance.</p> <p>To safeguard resident health, visitors with symptoms or exposure to infections, such as COVID or Influenza, are restricted from visiting.</p>
<b>PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:</b>	<p>a) All visitors are strongly encouraged to wear a mask indoors when visiting settings that are not in outbreak.</p> <p>b) Caregivers and general visitors are required to wear a mask when visiting a resident in a resident home area that is in a declared outbreak as communicated by the Lodge</p> <p>c) Exceptions to the masking requirements are as follows and outlined in COVID19 UNIVERSAL MASK &amp; EYE PROTECTION POLICY(IC-04-10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General caregivers and visitors are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while in the Lodge. Residents have the ongoing right to request any visitor in their room to wear a mask.</li> <li>• General caregivers and visitors are required to wear a mask in outbreak scenarios or if the resident has isolation precautions in place which require masking.</li> </ul> <p>d) Eye protection is required for general caregivers and visitors</p>

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	<p>when they are visiting residents who have isolation precautions in place which require eye protection.</p> <p>e) The home will provide masks, gloves and gowns as required and provide guidance when it is required to wear all the above PPE.</p>
<b>RESPONDING TO VISITOR NON-ADHERENCE:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>ENDING A VISIT:</b>	<p>Homes may end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy, provided:</p> <p>a) the home has explained the applicable requirement(s) to the visitor,</p> <p>b) the visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) and,</p> <p>c) the visitor has been given enough time to adhere to the requirement(s), and</p> <p>d) this will be documented in the resident(s)electronic health record by the Administrator or Designate.</p>
<b>TEMPORARILY PROHIBITING A VISITOR:</b>	<p>Homes may temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home's visitor policy.</p> <p>The following will be considered when determining the risk of the non-adherence behaviour:</p> <p>a) Alignment with the requirements set out in the current COVID-19 Guidance document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario,</p> <p>b) Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors and has been demonstrated consistently</p>

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	<p style="text-align: center;">by the visitor over multiple visits, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c) A previous history of visits being ended by the Home due to non-compliance.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>RESOURCES:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="https://www.gov.on.ca">LTCH RH Guidance for PHUs 20230626 (gov.on.ca)</a></li> <li>2. <a href="https://www.ontario.ca">COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario   ontario.ca</a></li> </ol>