

Long Term Care Division

Visiting Policy

Infection Control Manual

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Policy

To follow current Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) directives or legislation, and/or recommendations of Public Health. This policy includes protocols to maintain infection prevention and control (IPAC) standards within Macassa Lodge and Wentworth Lodge and includes the following key elements.

- a) Self-Screening prior to each visit to the home,
- b) Mask requirements for visitors based on current recommendations from MLTC, Public Health or in response to a risk assessment by the home in consultation with Public Health and/or the home's Medical Director.
- d) Information for visitors on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices, and
- e) Guidance on responding to non-adherence by visitors in the home, ending a visit and temporarily prohibiting a visitor.

Guiding Principles

Safety –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.

Equitable Access – All residents will have 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 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.

Resident Bill of Rights – respected at all times, including:

#6 “Every resident has the right to communicate in confidence, receive visitors of their choice and consult in private with any person without interference.” #26 “Every resident who is dying or who is very ill has the right to have family and friends present 24 hours per day.”

Types of Visitors

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

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,
- 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:

- 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.
- 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.

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.

IPAC Information/Education

Information is posted at the main entrance and throughout the home to highlight importance of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, following IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

Access to the Home and Screening Requirements

Access

- a) All visitors to the home will follow public health measures i.e., self-screening, physical distancing, enhanced hand hygiene, and masking as shared through the home's policies and communication.
- b) All visitors are expected to complete the Visitor Log Sign-in sheet on entry and exit. These logs will be maintained for 30 days and include all required information as per O. Reg 246/22.
- c) Visitors can access the home's main entrance from 8am to 8pm (9pm in summer months).
- d) Outside of these hours, visitors can request access by using the buzzer located

at the front of the entrance doors at Macassa Lodge or by calling the posted RN Supervisor cell phone at Wentworth Lodge

- e) The home reserves the right to implement and expect compliance with the home's policies, as well as IPAC measures beyond any minimum standards established by MLTC or Public Health. This may include limiting the type and number of visitors during Outbreaks based on recommendations from MLTC or Public Health.
- f) Smoking is prohibited in the home and within nine meters surrounding any entrance or exit.
- g) The consumption of alcohol is prohibited by visitors.
- h) Possession and use of illegal drugs and/or weapons is prohibited.

Screening

All visitors will self-screen for infection or illness prior to entering the home using signage posted at entrance.

To safeguard resident health, visitors with symptoms or exposure to infections, such as COVID or Influenza, are restricted from visiting.

Personal Protective Equipment

- a) All visitors are strongly encouraged to wear a mask indoors when visiting.
- b) Caregivers and general visitors are required to wear a mask in outbreak scenarios or if the resident has isolation precautions in place which require masking.
- c) Eye protection is required for general caregivers and visitors when they are visiting residents who have isolation precautions in place which require eye protection.
- d) 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 home will be a last resort response to non-adherence and signal a complete disregard of the policy by the visitor.

Ending a Visit

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), and
- d) this will be documented in the resident(s) electronic health record by the Administrator or Designate.

Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor

Homes may temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home's visitor policy.

The following will be considered when determining the risk of the non-adherence behaviour:

- a) Alignment with Ministry of Long Term Care directives or legislation, and/or recommendations of Public Health.
- b) Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors and has been demonstrated consistently by the visitor over multiple visits, and
- c) A previous history of visits being ended by the Home due to non-compliance.

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.