

June 29, 2021

**MEMO TO:** Long-Term Care Home Licensees  
**FROM:** Erin Hannah  
Associate Deputy Minister  
**SUBJECT:** Upcoming Changes - Further Easing of Restrictions

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With every passing day, I am thrilled to see that the number of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks within the long-term care (LTC) sector continues to decrease. This is attributed to the dedicated leaders and staff within the sector who have worked hard to keep our residents safe from COVID-19 through implementing public health measures and surveillance testing. Most importantly, you have worked hard to ensure the residents and yourselves have been vaccinated against COVID-19. At this time, an estimated 92% of long-term care staff have received one dose and 84% have received two doses.

Consistent with the cautious easing of measures set out in the province's Roadmap to Reopen and responsive to the high immunization rates achieved to date in the LTC sector, we are continuing with the gradual easing of restrictions in long-term care homes.

To enable homes, residents, caregivers, and families to plan their summer, we are sharing changes that will take effect July 7<sup>th</sup> after the province enters Step Two of the broader reopening plan, and the changes that will come into effect for LTC homes once the province enters Step Three of that broader plan. Communicating these changes now will give homes the time needed to adapt their operational policies to support the effective and safe implementation of new/modified requirements.

The latest suite of changes affecting homes have been informed by invaluable advice from residents and their families, public health experts, licensees, and other long-term care partners.

**Effective July 7, 2021:**

- The limit of two designated caregivers per resident is removed. Processes to designate persons as caregivers continue to be in place.
- Up to 10 people at a time can come for an outdoor visit with a long-term care home resident.

- All residents may have up to 2 general visitors and 2 caregivers at a time for an indoor visit.
- Personal care services, such as those provided by hairdressers/barbers, are permitted. Please note that personal care service providers are considered general visitors if they are not staff of the licensee or designated caregivers.
- Cohorting of residents can be relaxed during outdoor activities.
- The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health will be updating Directive #3. This update will be released in the coming days. It is anticipated that this will include reducing active screening of residents to once a day.

### **When the Province Enters Step 3 of the Broader Reopening Plan:**

The exact timing of these updates will be announced at a later day once the move to Step Three is confirmed. Changes will include:

- Returning to homes setting their own maximums for visitors based on operational capabilities with potential guidance on minimums.
- Permitting buffet and family style dining.
- Allowing activities such as karaoke, singing, and dancing.
- Permitting all residents to go on day and overnight absences regardless of immunization status.
- Enabling the resumption of off-site group excursions for residents.

Please note that only the changes taking effect July 7 have been included in the updated MLTC Guidance Document. A further update for the changes that will come into effect in Step Three of the broader reopening plan will be provided later. In addition to the changes noted for July 7, we have merged guidance and advice where possible to help decrease the number of documents homes need to refer to. This includes merging the Visitor Policy within the Guidance Document and consolidating select FAQs into a single document.

I would also like to acknowledge that on June 25, 2021, Public Health Agency of Canada released a guidance document related to public health measures such as physical distancing and masking based on immunization status. While we look forward to a time when masking and physical distancing is not required in long-term care homes, we will not be relaxing these requirements at this stage.

### Updates to Surveillance Testing Directive

The *Minister's Directive: COVID-19: Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes* has been updated to provide an exemption from rapid antigen testing for those individuals who routinely receive false positive antigen screening results. Where an individual has received 3 false positive results within 30 days, the individual will instead be required to show a negative PCR Test result from within the last 7 days to gain entry to the home. This change will be effective June 30, 2021.

## Immunization Policy Resource Guide Update

As a reminder, last Friday we updated the resource guide to support implementation of the *Minister's Directive – Long-Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy*. The guide now includes an educational resource (COVID-19 Vaccination: Making an Informed Decision Learning Module) and a sample declaration form developed by Lakeridge Health. We have made another update today to include an educational video created by Dr. Nathan Stall and 19 To Zero Canada for AdvantAgeOntario. Our great appreciation to the various partners who have developed and shared learning materials

### Provincial Recommendations and Directive #5

Attached for your reference is a memo from Dr. Barbara Yaffe regarding recommended use of N95 respirators in long-term care and retirement homes noting that the Ministry of Health's Directive 5 is the provincial baseline standard for provision of PPE.

As always, thank you for the work you and your teams do each day to provide residents with a safe home. We remain available to support homes directly should they have any questions related to the pandemic. The team can be reached by emailing [MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca](mailto:MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

*original signed by*

Erin Hannah

#### Attachments:

- MLTC Pandemic Response FAQs, June 29, 2021
- Minister's Directive: COVID-19: Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes
- LTCH COVID-19 Immunization Policy Resource Guide, June 28, 2021
- Long-Term Care Visitor, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot, Effective July 7<sup>th</sup>
- Memorandum: Provincial Recommendations and Directive #5

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health  
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery Division, MOH  
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics Division, MOH/MLTC  
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario  
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association

Monika Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
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Jeff Butler, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Pandemic Response, MLTC  
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