

COVID-19

Long Term Care Resident Visitation Principles

Purpose

- The purpose of this document is to ensure the philosophy of resident and family centered and partnered care are foundational to visitation and to provide thoughtful guidance to minimize the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in Long Term Care (LTC) facilities. This document is intended to support the Long-Term Care operators in fulfilling the needs of residents to have regular communication and visitation with close family and/or friends and care from family caregivers who are essential partners in care.
- The principles and guidance in this document is NOT intended to be prescriptive and does NOT replace clinical and operational judgement of staff and leaders of the LTC facilities when making operational plans and decisions to support visitations. This guideline strongly emphasizes the importance of a resident and family centered approach and a need for flexibility and compassion in operational decision-making regarding visitations. It's also important to consider the needs of those residents whose health and wellbeing is at higher risk without the presence of family caregivers e.g. those with physical disability, cognitive impairment, etc.
- This guideline supports the role and importance of:
 - **“Designated family caregivers”** - any person whom the resident and/or substitute decision maker identifies and designates as their family caregiver. As essential partners in care, these individuals actively and regularly participate in providing care and may support feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity, and assistance in decision-making
 - **“General visitor”** - family and friends who visit for social reasons
 - **“Essential Service Provider”** - individuals providing essential support services as determined by the care team (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP).
 - **“Non-Essential Service Provider”** - individuals providing support services that are not deemed essential and can be shut down during pandemic, e.g. hairdressers.
 - **“Volunteers”** – individuals who are registered and trained at the site are not considered visitors and are strongly encouraged to be involved with facilitating visitations.

Principles

1. Recognizing the important role that ongoing connection with family and loved ones plays in the health and well-being of residents, LTC operators will actively support the ability of residents to remain connected with their loved ones during COVID -19.
2. LTC operators are encouraged to identify and implement creative solutions to facilitate and actively support **virtual visits** (e.g. video call on cell phones or tablets) as an alternative means for residents to connect with their families and friends. It is recognized that this

solution may not be feasible for all residents or families and is dependent on availability of technology.

3. **Visitor limitations are directly related to the presence/transmission of COVID-19 in the province as determined by Chief Public Health Officer. Limitations are separated into three distinct levels, each of which is detailed in the Appendix.**

LEVEL ONE: Outbreak or High Level of COVID-19 Activity

LEVEL TWO: Moderate Level of COVID-19 Activity

LEVEL THREE: Very Low Level of COVID-19 Activity

4. **In collaboration with Public Health, LTC Operators will determine the need to suspend all visits in the case of a confirmed/potential COVID-19 outbreak in the facility or local area or upon the direction of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer.**
5. Visitors must adhere to public health advice regarding close contact (maintain a distance of 6 feet/2 metres), respiratory hygiene and other Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) and public health (PH) measures while visiting. Consideration may be given to allowing brief hugs and handholding while maintaining as much distance as possible between the faces of the resident and visitor and ensuring the availability of alcohol-based hand rub for prompt and effective hand hygiene both immediately before and after these encounters. Visiting family members from the same household and/or bubble do not have to physically distance from one another.
6. Screening of all visitors must occur, including assessment for symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19 prior to entry: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-visitor-triage-process-for-long-term.pdf>
7. Each site will need to develop specific plans for enabling outdoor/indoor visitation by visitors due to differing layouts and the varied needs of residents and families. Plans must be communicated to residents and their families.
8. Each site and region must develop a **rapid problem solving and appeal process** to ensure residents and families concerns related to visitation are addressed in timely manner
9. Operators must proactively and collaboratively work with the residents/designates to identify **up to two "designated family caregiver(s)"** i.e. only those close family and/or friends who have a clearly established pattern of involvement in providing active care and support to the resident's emotional wellbeing, health, and quality of life. These family caregivers will participate regularly in the care of the residents and sites should consider providing them with some identification such as badge or sticker. In addition, residents/ designates may identify **general visitors** who wish to visit for social reasons.
10. A plan must be developed in collaboration with the resident/designate to determine the nature, duration, frequency, and timing of the visits by these visitors. Family and friends of the residents will always be treated with compassion and understanding in order to accommodate special circumstances. Visitors will be provided with access to basic facilities such as washrooms.
11. Each operator will determine when residents can have visits on the property. Operators may implement regularly scheduled general visits through a booking system or designated drop-in times and provide reasonable flexibility to accommodate for varied circumstances of residents and families, e.g. family members who work. Process to be established to sign in and out all visitors to support contact tracing, if required

12. Considerations for On-site Outdoor Visits

- Reasonable number of visitors per resident may visit at a time depending on the appropriate space availability.
- Minors (under 14) are recommended to be accompanied by an adult.
- Sites are to determine overall number of visitors at one time.
- Based on evaluation of risk and clinical judgement and in collaboration/ discussion with the resident/ delegate, the site may be unable to facilitate outdoor visits for certain residents.
- The site reserves the right to cancel visits due to inclement weather.
- Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered.
- Wearing of non-medical (cloth) masks during outdoor visits is not required but is encouraged.

13. Considerations for Indoor Visits

- **Designated family caregivers** should have flexibility to visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team, without the need to formally book an appointment, as long as it does not negatively impact the care of other residents or the ability of other family caregivers to provide care and support. These family caregivers should have reasonable access to both indoor (including resident room) and outdoor areas as essential partners in care but must maintain physical distancing from other residents and staff. They must have training in and abide by Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.
- For **general visitors**, outdoor visits are preferred and encouraged to keep the number of individuals entering the facility to minimum. However, sites may consider some visits from general visitors on case by case basis in resident's room if the resident is in a single room; for double and multi-bedded rooms or for other reasons, an alternative indoor space must be identified. General visitors may be escorted by staff to – and from – the designated area, the escort should minimize the visitor's need to touch surfaces on route to the visiting space, e.g., the escort should open the doors, press the elevator buttons, etc.
- Visitation with other residents is not recommended
- Visitors should be informed that they are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering and they should bring their own. In exceptional circumstances, a mask may be provided by the facility. Visitors in Orange or Red Zone residents/units will be provided with appropriate PPE, in line with the Provincial Personal Protective Equipment Requirements
- Visitors must perform hand hygiene when entering/leaving the building.

14. Hairdressers (when permitted in Level 3) will adhere to the following additional measures:

- Hair salon will comply with public health occupancy/limit and the physical distancing requirements.
- Hair Salon staff will be screened prior to entry and will be required to wear a medical mask (recommended that they provide).
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols (including hand hygiene) will be conducted

- before and after each resident hair care.
- Residents will be escorted to the hair salon at the time of their appointment and back to their room following their appointment by unit staff

15. **End of Life Care** – Consideration will be given to the stage of illness, projection regarding timing of death and trajectory of expected decline. The decision related to when an individual is reaching their end of life will be informed by the care team and is unique to the circumstances of each individual. While difficult to be precise around when an individual is at end of life, this generally refers to the last two weeks of life.

References/ Adapted from:

Finding the Right Balance: An Evidence-Informed Guidance Document to Support the Re-Opening of Canadian Long-Term Care Homes to Family Caregivers and Visitors during the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2fa7b03917eed9b5a436d8/t/5f0f2678f205304ab1e695be/1594828410565/%27NIA+LTC+Visitor+Guidance+Document.pdf>

Better Together: Re-Integration of Family Caregivers as Essential Partners in Care in a Time of COVID-19

https://www.cfhi-fcass.ca/docs/default-source/itr/tools-and-resources/bt-re-integration-of-family-caregivers-as-essential-partners-covid-19-e.pdf?sfvrsn=5b3d8f3d_2

Appendix – Visitor Restrictions (Personal Care Homes)

Long Term Care Level: One **RESTRICTED** (Outbreak or High Level of COVID-19 Activity)

LTC Type of Visit	Visitors Recommended/Limited	Precautions/Restrictions
Essential Service Providers (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP)	Only those services for client as determined by care team. Minimize external healthcare professionals.	Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance.
Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser)	Not recommended	Visits Suspended
End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life	Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at same time if physical distancing can be maintained. In addition, Up to ONE (1) general visitor may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained.	By appointment for general visitors Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance. General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces.
Designated Family Caregivers	Designated family caregiver(s) may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate but one (1) may visit at a time]	Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance
General Visitors (indoor/ outdoor)	Not recommended	Visits Suspended

Personal Care Home Level: Two LIMITED
(Moderate Level of COVID-19 Activity)

LTC Type of Visit	Visitors Recommended/ Limited	Precautions/Restrictions
Essential Service Providers, (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP)	Only those essential services for client as determined by care team. Minimize external healthcare professionals.	Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance
Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser)	Not recommended	Visits Suspended
End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life	Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at same time if physical distancing can be maintained. In addition, Up to Two (2) general visitor may be permitted at a time if physical distancing can be maintained.	By appointment for general visitors Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Non-medical mask required (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance. General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces.
Designated Family Caregivers	Designated family caregiver(s) may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate but one (1) may visit at a time]	Sign in and Out Screening Before Entry Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance.
General Visitors - Indoor Visits	Not recommended	Visits Suspended

LTC Type of Visit	Visitors Recommended/ Limited	Precautions/Restrictions
General Visitors - Outdoor	<p>Reasonable number of general visitors per resident may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained.</p> <p>Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered.</p>	<p>By appointment or drop ins for general visitors as determined by site</p> <p>Sign in and Out</p> <p>Screening Before Entry</p> <p>Non-medical mask encouraged</p> <p>Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance</p>

Personal Care Home Level: Three SCREENED
(Very Low Level of COVID-19 Activity)

LTC Type of Visit	Visitors Recommended/ Limited	Precautions/Restrictions
Essential Service Providers (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP)	Services as determined by care team including routine and chronic care provision	Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance
Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser)	Permitted – with precautions (hairdresser may not have a public business in a PCH and must work in a single PCH)	Screening before entry Required to wear a medical mask (recommended that they provide) so resident doesn't need to wear a mask during hair care. Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting before and after each resident hair care Resident escorted to and from the appointment
End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life	Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at same time if physical distancing can be maintained. In addition, reasonable number of general visitors may be permitted at a time if physical distancing can be maintained.	By appointment for general visitors Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Non-medical mask required Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance. General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces.

LTC Type of Visit	Visitors Recommended/ Limited	Precautions/Restrictions
Designated Family Caregivers	Designated family caregiver(s) may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate and both may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained]	Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance
General Visitors - Indoor Visits	Outdoor visits are preferred and encouraged for general visitors to keep the number of individuals entering the facility to minimum. However, sites may consider some visits from general visitors in resident's room if the resident is in a single room; for double and multi-bedded rooms or for other reasons, an alternative indoor space must be identified.	By appointment for general visitors or as determined by the site Sign in and out Screening before entry Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to the Zone) Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces No visitation with other residents
Visitors - Outdoor	Reasonable number of general visitors per resident may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained. Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered.	By appointment or drop ins for general visitors as determined by site Sign in-and out Screening Before Entry Non-medical mask encouraged Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance