



The Regional  
Municipality  
of Durham

Social Services  
Department

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Dear Family Member,

These past six months have been among the most eventful and difficult in the history of long-term care. The Provincial guidance in response to COVID-19 have changed frequently and we have been quick to respond to ensure that we are operating in alignment with provincial direction while maintaining the best possible quality of life for those under our care.

These times have no doubt been difficult for you as your access to loved ones has been restricted, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and for your efforts to work with us.

It is essential that we remain vigilant to the potential for exposure that the virus brings. As infections climb across the province it is vital that we continue to enforce infection prevention and control practices and that we prepare ourselves for a potential outbreak. Our residents are depending on you!

To clarify expectations for visiting in the home and for leaving the building both during and outside of an outbreak please remember the following:

**Absences:**

Residents may leave the Home in two ways:

- Short Stay Absences: Occurs when a resident leaves the home's property for health care related, social, or other reasons. Except for the hospital, absences may not be overnight.
- Temporary Absences: Occurs when a resident leaves the home's property overnight (unless to emergency department). These **must** be approved in advance by the long-term care home and residents must be isolated for 14 days on return.

All absences must take place off home property and residents are expected to follow public health direction including the wearing of masks if tolerated. Masks will be provided at the reception desk and should be worn at all times.

Residents will be transported by staff to home areas prior to leaving and upon their return. Residents will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms when leaving and when returning. All temporary absences and overnight departures (excluding those for a single night in the

hospital emergency department) will be isolated for 14 days upon their return. Short stay absences will be monitored and isolated immediately if any symptoms develop or if previous contact has occurred with a possible COVID-19 case in the community.

No absences will be permitted if a home is in outbreak and no resident will be readmitted who has left the home until the outbreak is over.

### **Visits:**

Directive 3 and the Ministry of Long-Term Care's *Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care* policy document have created additional categories of visitors to the home and identified specific expectations for visitors on their stay. These include:

- Essential visitors (support workers): A person visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home.
- Essential visitors (caregivers): Designated by the resident (or their substitute decision-maker) in writing visitor to provide direct care to the resident including Activities of Daily Living, cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity.
- General visitors: A person visiting for non-essential or social reasons either inside the building, outside on the building property, or by Zoom

### **All indoor visitors must:**

- Complete infection prevention and control training provided by the Home
- Complete policy training provided by the Home
- Wear a mask at all times and any other additional Personal Protective Equipment deemed necessary by the home
- Sign in and out of the building and home area
- Attest to a negative COVID-19 test within the past 14 days
- Pass COVID-19 active screening on arrival to the home

Visitors who do not comply with these directions will be denied entry to the home. During an outbreak only one designated essential caregiver may visit indoors within the home.

For more information on absences and visits, please visit [www.durham.ca/LTCupdates](http://www.durham.ca/LTCupdates) or contact a member of the Home's management team.

The Region of Durham continues to focus on resident, family, and staff safety while promoting resident quality of life in alignment with the Bill of Rights in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007. We are committed to implementing those processes that legislation allows so that we, like all Durham residents, learn to cope with COVID-19.

It is imperative that you comply with all the provincial guidelines regarding your social circle and the limiting size of gatherings given the increased positive COVID cases in the community and out of concern for the safety of the residents and staff. Please, continue to wash your hands, wear your mask at all times when in the LTC home, keep socially distant, and get your flu shot when it becomes available.

Thank you for everything that you have done and that you continue to do to improve the quality of life for our residents and to ensure their safety as well as those of their families, and of our staff.

*Laura MacDermaid*

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