



**The Regional
Municipality
of Durham**

Social Services
Department

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Dear Family Member,

Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update

With an increase in active COVID-19 cases across Ontario, the provincial government issued a province-wide Stay-at-Home order effective April 8th, to be in place for at least 28 days. The Order requires everyone to remain at home except for essential purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services (getting vaccinated), for outdoor exercise close to home and with the people you live with, or for work that cannot be done remotely.

Our homes will continue to follow all directives issued by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MOLTC) and guidance from the Health Department. Essential caregivers are the only visitors permitted to visit LTC homes with a maximum of one caregiver visiting at a time. Exceptions remain for end-of-life or critical illness. All short-stay and temporary absences continue to be suspended apart from medical appointments.

Outbreak Guidelines

With over 90% of residents fully immunized, the MOLTC updated the definition of outbreak for long-term care and retirement homes. Previously, the definition was one lab-confirmed positive case (resident, staff or visitor). As of April 7th, the definition of an outbreak is two or more lab-confirmed cases (resident, staff and/or visitor) in a home, within a 14-day period, that have an epidemiological link and where at least one person could have reasonably acquired their infection in the home. At the same time, the definition of a suspect outbreak will include instances of a single resident case. Public health units will continue to be responsible for declaring an outbreak.

This change will provide some relief and mean a better quality of life for residents and support continued efforts to move people into homes from both hospitals and communities while keeping people safe.

Surveillance Testing

Our homes continue to administer Rapid Antigen (RA) testing up to 3 times a week on nonconsecutive days for all essential caregivers. As previously shared, the RA test must be completed, and a negative result obtained before you are able to visit your loved one. We are no longer able to accept a weekly PCR test from essential caregivers. Please note that when a home is in outbreak, surveillance and testing requirements may change as per public health direction and you will be notified accordingly.

Vaccinations

If you are an essential caregiver and have not yet registered for the vaccine, please consider doing so as the vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting COVID-19. Please book your first dose vaccine clinic appointment directly through the applicable online portal or the call-in line. There are two clinics to choose from. For Oshawa, the portal link is covidvaccine.lh.ca and the call-in number is (905) 721-4828. For Scugog, Brock, Uxbridge, Pickering, Ajax, and Bowmanville, the portal link is www.durham.ca/vaccineappointment and the call-in number is 1-888-444-5113.

Visit <https://www.durham.ca/CovidVaccines> for the latest information on current priority groups eligible to receive a vaccine in Durham Region.

Beginning April 10, 2021, seniors and all residents of Durham Region can book a free round trip from their residence to a local vaccine clinic using Durham Region Transit's (DRT) On Demand or Specialized Services (eligibility required for Specialized Services). This temporary free service is funded by a generous \$10,000 donation from Ontario Power Generation (OPG) in support of the province's COVID-19 vaccine rollout. For further information, please visit <https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-vaccines.aspx#Transportation-options-for-Durham-Region-COVID-19-vaccination-clinics>.

Summary

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to me or to a member of the management team at the LTC home. I reiterate my thanks for your continued commitment to do everything we can to keep our most vulnerable safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Laura MacDermaid