



June 21, 2021

Dear Family Member,

Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update

We are happy to report that currently, all four homes are isolation and outbreak free with no active staff or resident cases. Thank you for your participation in making this possible. As we move forward to recovery, we need to remain vigilant and continue to keep the safety of our residents and of each other first and foremost a priority. This is especially important in Durham Region as we are in a hot spot for the Delta variant.

Vaccinations

The Ministry of Long-term Care has reported that an estimated 99% of residents and 77% of staff in LTC in Ontario have received both doses of the vaccine. We can report that across the four regional homes approximately 80% of the staff have received their first dose and 70% are fully immunized. While not every home has yet reached the 70% threshold for staff, this remains a top priority. In terms of residents and essential caregivers (EC) we have approximately 93% of residents and 57% of ECs who are fully immunized with 71% of ECs who have received their first dose.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care is working on a toolkit that will support homes to independently provide the vaccine onsite and we are looking forward to exploring this when it becomes available.

In addition, the ministry is requiring homes to put in place a COVID-19 immunization policy as an additional tool to promote vaccine education and uptake. Homes will have the policy in place by July 1, 2021. The policy requires staff to do one of three things:

1. Provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19;
2. Provide a documented medical reason for not being vaccinated; or
3. Participate in an educational program on the role of vaccination.

Although this policy *does not mandate* the vaccine, we are hopeful this approach will increase the vaccine uptake.

If you are an essential caregiver and have not yet been vaccinated, please consider doing so as vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting COVID-19. Your first dose vaccine clinic appointment can be booked directly through the applicable online portal or the call-in line. For Durham Region clinics, 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.

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Surveillance Testing

Thank you for following the surveillance testing in place in each home. These protocols are developed in accordance with ministry direction and will continue to ensure effective screening in each home. The home will continue to notify you if/when the protocols change according to ministry directives or change in outbreak status as soon as possible. The clinic staff in each home are available to provide you with information and direction on what is required as well. We appreciate your collaboration in meeting these mandated requirements.

Summary

As we move forward towards recovery and restrictions continue to loosen in the community and in our homes, it is important that residents and visitors continue to adhere to public health measures in the home, including good hand hygiene and appropriate masking. These strategies will ensure that residents never again face the risks from COVID-19 that we have seen over the past year.

Government direction to long-term care continues to develop rapidly. In follow up to the many questions we have received related to the recent changes made to the visitor and absence policies we have included a Frequently Asked Question list as support.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to a member of the management team at the LTC home.

Thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to a continued return to normal in the months ahead.

Laura MacDermaid