



The Regional
Municipality
of Durham

Social Services
Department

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Dear Family Member,

Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update

The Region of Durham remains in the Red-Control zone of the province's COVID-19 Response Framework.

In terms of our long-term care (LTC) homes, there are no changes to visitor policies and registered essential caregiver visits continue to be limited to one person per visit. It is not until we are in the Yellow-Protect zone, that restrictions on visiting will change.

As of today, Hillsdale Estates is experiencing a small COVID-19 outbreak. The outbreak is under control and we continue to work closely with Public Health in managing all suspected and confirmed positive cases and at this time, there are no residents affected.

Surveillance Testing

As of March 15, 2021, all four LTC homes have transitioned to 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 will no longer be 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

The province of Ontario has made long-term care (LTC) homes a priority with regards to the COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Program. This includes ensuring the residents, staff and essential caregivers have primary access to the vaccine to support the protection of the most vulnerable in this pandemic. Getting vaccinated is critical to protecting yourself, your loved ones, and the most vulnerable individuals from COVID-19. Each person vaccinated brings us one step closer to eliminating COVID-19 from LTC and our communities. To date, through the efforts of families, staff, and residents, over 90% of the residents in our LTC homes have been fully vaccinated. This achievement means the highest level of available protection for these vulnerable citizens and greater peace of mind for them, their families, and staff.

For those essential caregivers who have not opted to receive the vaccine, it is normal to feel nervous about new things. It is critical that you do what is best for you and your loved ones and that you have access to accurate information that will help support your decision. Vaccination both reduces the risk of developing COVID-19 as well the risk of severe disease

progression in those that do become infected. While the Internet is filled with all sorts of information; it is important that you review information that is trustworthy, science-based and updated on a regular basis. One of the best sources of information about the vaccine can be found at www.durham.ca/covidvaccine and I encourage you to review it. If you have any questions, I encourage you to ask your own medical practitioner. If you do decide to get the vaccine, please click on the following link <https://tinyurl.com/DurhamLTCVaccine> so that your information can be forwarded to the Lakeridge Clinic for a vaccination appointment. All names are verified by the Home's staff before being sent to Lakeridge Health.

Lakeridge Health has created a number of videos to educate the public on COVID-19 vaccinations. For more information on the vaccination and to watch these videos please follow this link;

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2jY9UzvBjU2ED-Dld9K-90WdDSOrQX-A>

Summary

March 11, 2021 marked the one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaration of the global COVID-19 pandemic; a pandemic that has impacted our lives in countless ways large and small. As we continue moving through this, I want to acknowledge and reflect upon the collective experiences of the residents, families, and staff, including isolation, grief, and tremendous loss. We have all been through so much, but if we take care of ourselves and others and do our best, we will come out of this stronger.

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