



The Regional
Municipality
of Durham

Social Services
Department

Laura MacDermaid
Director
Long-Term Care &
Services for Seniors
Division

605 ROSSLAND RD. E.
PO BOX 623
WHITBY, ON L1N 6A3
CANADA

905-668-7711
1-800-372-1102

www.durham.ca

February 16, 2021

Dear Family Member,

Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update

On February 8th, the provincial government announced that on February 16th Durham Region will move into the red zone in 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 and visitations are restricted to the resident's room only.

As of today, Fairview Lodge, Hillsdale Estates and Lakeview Manor are experiencing small COVID-19 outbreaks. The outbreaks are under control and we continue to work closely with Public Health in managing all suspected and confirmed positive cases and there are no residents affected.

As a result of the Variants of Concern (VOC), Public Health has advised that homes in outbreak are to follow new testing requirements. This includes completing a Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for all residents and staff in the LTC home as soon as possible. In addition, we may be required to test both residents and staff on a regular basis until we are satisfied that the VOCs are not affecting the home.

Vaccinations

The homes continue to work closely with Lakeridge Health to ensure that all residents who want the vaccine are offered it. This includes mobile vaccination clinics in each home as new residents are admitted. We have not received any further information about the availability of first dose vaccines for registered essential caregivers and staff. For those who have received their first dose, Lakeridge Health will be contacting you regarding the second dose. The homes continue to collect names of registered essential caregivers and staff who wish to register for the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. Please click on the following link <https://tinyurl.com/DurhamLTCVaccine> to register and your information will be forwarded to the Lakeridge Clinic when we are advised they are accepting registrations.

New Screening and Testing Requirements

As I shared with you in my last update, as of February 16th, Rapid Antigen (RA) testing will be offered for essential caregivers, support workers and general visitors (once permitted). The transition to RA has been delayed by a few days at Lakeview Manor because of the outbreak, so you are

encouraged to get your PCR test until the home is ready to transition later this week.

Essential caregivers will be required to undergo the RA test and obtain a negative result each day you come to the home prior to visiting your family member. Please note that it takes between 15 -20 minutes for the test results to be processed prior to leaving the swabbing area. We will be asking for your verbal consent prior to the test.

For the next several weeks, essential caregivers may choose to continue with the weekly PCR testing if that is more convenient. Once RA testing is fully implemented across LTC homes, PCR testing will continue to be used only in instances where individuals are symptomatic or have a positive RA test, individuals who have been in contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or as otherwise directed by Public Health.

Frequently Asked Questions:

If I have received both doses of the vaccine, do I still need to be tested each time I come to the LTCH?

Yes. While two doses of the COVID vaccines confer 95% immunity, we don't yet know if getting the vaccine will prevent you from spreading the illness to other people. That's why it is important to be vigilant about following all the prevention rules to help stop the spread. This includes surveillance testing, active screening, infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices, hand hygiene, physical distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

I am an essential caregiver. If I decide to get either a PCR or RA test near my home, do I still need to get an RA test when I come to visit my mom?

No. You will be required to show proof of a negative PCR test result within the past 7 days and attest to not subsequently testing positive you will be permitted into the home at this time. If you provide proof of a negative RA test taken the day of your visit, you will be permitted into the home.

If I visit my dad more than once per day, do I have to get an RA test each visit?

No. If you had an RA test that day, you will not need to be retested.

I work in a retirement home, so I am already being tested. I am also an essential caregiver at the LTC home. Do I still have to get tested when I visit?

If you have a negative PCR test result within the past 7 days and attest to not subsequently testing positive, you will not be required to be tested at the LTCH. If you provide proof that you had a negative RA test taken the day of your visit, you will be permitted into the home. If you do not have a valid PCR test and are visiting on a day you did not have an RA test at

your workplace, you will be required to have an RA test prior to being permitted into the home.

Why does the RA test have to be completed every time I come to the home?

The RA test is a screening tool and is part of the active screening process required by the ministry. It is not a diagnostic tool. If you test positive with the RA test, you will be required to take a PCR test to confirm whether you have the virus and will be required to return home to await the results.

I am not a registered essential caregiver. Could I take the RA test and visit my mom?

Not at this time. General visits are not permitted during the following Public Health Unit Levels: Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, Grey-Lockdown. The Durham Region is currently in the red zone, so visits are restricted to only registered essential caregivers at this time.

[Summary](#)

I hope this information has been clear and helpful to you. 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