



**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

905-666-6239
1-888-721-0622

www.durham.ca

March 14th, 2022

Dear Family Member,

[LTC Homes COVID-19 Status](#)

As of today, we have one Resident Home Area at Hillsdale Estates experiencing an outbreak. For up-to-date information on the status of your home, please check the website at www.durham.ca/ltcupdates and if you have any specific questions, do not hesitate to contact the home.

[Loosening of Restrictions](#)

At this stage of the pandemic, with the Omicron wave subsiding and steps being taken to re-open Ontario, the province is now beginning to ease measures for long-term care homes. We strive to achieve a balance between protecting residents from reducing COVID-19 risk and supporting overall quality of life. The health and safety of our residents, staff and visitors remains our highest priority, which is why screening, masking, and testing requirements will remain in place for the time being.

As of March 14th, to support this balance and reflect where we are in the pandemic:

- COVID-19 vaccination is no longer a requirement for visiting in the four Region of Durham Long-Term Care homes. All visitors who enter the home must ensure they remain compliant with mask wearing, screening and surveillance testing. Please note however, that vaccination remains a key defense against COVID-19 and all Ontarians who are eligible are encouraged to get vaccinated, including receiving a booster dose.
- Each resident may now have four registered essential caregivers. If you would like to be registered as an essential caregiver, please contact the home directly. Unlike general visitors, essential caregivers may still visit during outbreaks and when a resident is placed in isolation, unless otherwise directed by public health. During an outbreak, we are limiting residents to one essential caregiver visiting at a time to maintain social distancing.
- There can be up to four general visitors and/or caregivers visiting a resident at one time for indoor visits, unless the RHA is in outbreak.
- Outdoor visits can be any size, space permitting. There are no screening and testing requirements for outdoor visits. For the safety of our residents, masks (either cloth or medical) must be worn during the outdoor visit.
- All residents, regardless of their vaccination status, can enjoy social absences of any duration. Testing requirements are still in place for

residents returning from such absences. This includes a period of isolation for those going on overnight visits, so please ensure you discuss this with the home prior to making plans.

- Social activities within the home can be among different groups of residents. Cohorting is only required for dining. Cohorting would resume again if the home should go into an outbreak situation. Large social group activities where potential crowding can occur should continue to be avoided, and IPAC measures should continue to be followed by staff, residents, and visitors. Caregivers and visitors may join group activities where space permits.
- Caregivers and general visitors may accompany a resident for meals to assist a resident with eating, however the visitor should remain masked at all times while in the home and not eat with the resident.

Screening and Testing Requirements

Active screening and surveillance testing is still a requirement for entry into a long-term care home. All registered essential caregivers and general visitors must be rapid antigen tested upon every visit and wait for the test results prior to heading to the RHA.

Testing requirements for COVID19 Recovered

All individuals who previously had a confirmed COVID-19 infection may resume surveillance testing 90 days from the date of their COVID infection. A positive PCR test is required in order to be exempt from surveillance testing for 90 days.

Visiting Safely in Long Term Care Homes

The Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table, in collaboration with members of the Congregate Care Settings Working Group, has prepared a slide deck which includes guidance for friends, families and essential caregivers on visiting safely with LTC residents. The slide deck can be found here: <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/supporting-long-term-care-home-residents-during-omicron/>

As restrictions are being lifted, please remember the importance of remaining vigilant with public health measures, such as screening, testing, masking, and using appropriate personal protective equipment so that we continue to move in the right direction.

Laura MacDermaid