



Long-Term Care & Services for Seniors Division
Hillsdale Estates Newsletter
Issue 1, March 2026



Mission

Strong People...Caring Communities...Our Future!

Vision

We will create a diverse, equitable and inclusive community that embraces person-centred care and meaningful connection for all

We Value

Individuality, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Dignity, Excellence

LTC and Services for Seniors Division news

 **Director's message** 

As we move from a long, cold winter into the promise of spring, there's a real sense of renewal across our long-term care community. In January, our Senior Leadership Team met with our Family Council Presidents to review our Strategic Plan, reaffirming our shared commitment to our pillars of Care and Service, Embracing Innovation and Workplace Excellence.

2026 is shaping up to be a particularly busy and exciting year. We are preparing to open our new 200-bed long-term care home, Seaton Village, in north Pickering in late fall; completing the final stage of our journey toward Accreditation Canada recertification next January; and expanding our Caring Connections Durham emotional model of care to our other homes following a successful implementation at Lakeview Manor.

We extend a warm welcome to all new residents, families, staff and volunteers– please stay connected, ask questions, and share your feedback with your care team or leadership. We are here to support you.

Enjoy this addition of the newsletter.

~ Laura MacDermaid, Director, Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors



If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Tammy Clarke, Administrative Assistant at 905-579-1777 ext. 6314.

Quality

2025 Satisfaction Surveys

Thank you to all residents and family members who completed the 2025 Satisfaction Survey. Both resident and family satisfaction came in at all-time highs this year.

We also had the highest level of response rate from residents, with 81.5 per cent of capable residents completing the survey. Our divisional overall satisfaction from residents came in at 84.5 per cent.

Our Family Satisfaction Survey response rate was lower this year, at 27.4 per cent. The Canada Post mail strike at the time may have been a contributing factor to this lower response rate. Our family satisfaction rate came in at 94.8 per cent.

Each home is currently reviewing their individual reports and creating action plans for 2026 on how they can continue to improve quality care and services.



Policy updates

Throughout the year, we will now be providing information in this newsletter on some of our recent policy changes that impact residents and families.

- **Transfer of Resident within the Home:** this policy has been updated with a new statement that the home reserves the right to move a resident to a different room or home area if there is an imminent safety risk.
- **Release of Personal Effects:** this policy was revised to indicate when personal effects are not picked up after discharge or death, the home will communicate with the family with deadline dates. If items are not picked up by the date, the items will be deemed abandoned and donated or disposed of.
- **Smoking:** this policy had wording changes to clearly identify that residents can only smoke outside in designated smoking areas while on property. It also states that staff, family members and visitors are to follow the Regional by-law and not smoke on Region of Durham property.
- **Privately Hired Services:** this policy is new and replaces several former policies. This policy explains the process for residents and family members who wish to bring in private hired services into the home. The process has been streamlined to make the process easier for residents and family members, while still maintaining the requirements of the Region.

Copies of policies are available upon request; please speak to the homes' Administration.



Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

As we continue navigating the winter respiratory season, we want to thank all families, visitors and staff for your ongoing support in keeping our homes safe and healthy. Below are some important updates and reminders from the IPAC team.



Winter vaccine campaigns: thank you!

This winter, each of our divisional homes ran successful vaccine campaigns to help protect residents and staff from seasonal respiratory illnesses.

Across all homes, we offered RSV, influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, and we are grateful to everyone who participated. Vaccination remains one of the most effective ways to prevent severe illness— your participation makes a meaningful difference in keeping our community safe.

IPAC reminders for families, visitors and staff

To help reduce the spread of respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses, please continue following these core IPAC practices:

1. Hand hygiene

- Clean your hands **following the four moments of hand hygiene:**
 - Before resident/environment contact
 - Perform hand hygiene before entering a resident's environment or touching any items in their care space.
 - Before aseptic procedures
 - Clean hands before performing any procedure that requires a clean technique, such as:
 - wound care
 - handling a sterile device
 - preparing medications
 - After exposure risk to bodily fluids
 - Perform hand hygiene immediately after possible exposure to bodily fluids—even if gloves were worn.
 - Examples: after toileting care, after handling soiled linens, after removing gloves.
 - After resident/environment contact
 - Clean hands when leaving the resident's environment or after touching anything in their care space.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash with soap and water when visibly soiled.



2. Mask wearing

- Please ensure you follow the masking policy for your respective home, and when you have recently felt unwell and are being watched by the Return-to-Work Program.
- Masks help protect vulnerable residents during peak respiratory illness season.



3. Stay home when sick

- If you have symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea, **please stay home** and avoid visiting.
- Staff are to complete passive self-screening and follow Return-to-Work guidance before returning to work.

4. Respiratory and cough etiquette

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Use tissues and discard them immediately after use.
- Sanitize/wash your hands after.



5. Follow all posted signage

- Please adhere to any unit-specific precautions, outbreak signs or personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.

Thank you for keeping our homes safe

Your ongoing co-operation helps protect residents, staff and families throughout the year– but it's especially important during the winter months. IPAC practices are most effective when we all do them consistently.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to reach out to the home IPAC lead.

Practice and Innovation

In 2025, learning across our homes continued to support safe, respectful and person-centred care. Education focused on everyday practices that matter most to residents and families, including dignity and communication, safety, infection prevention, falls prevention, and supporting independence and well-being.

Updates to orientation and onboarding helped new team members feel prepared and supported as they begin working with residents and families, contributing to more consistent practices across all homes.

Looking ahead, Practice and Innovation will continue to focus on education that strengthens safety, quality of care and consistency in care delivery.



2026 mandatory training

This year's annual mandatory training will be released in February and refreshed to reflect current standards and expectations.

Thank you to our staff, residents, families and volunteers for your continued partnership in creating safe, welcoming and compassionate homes.



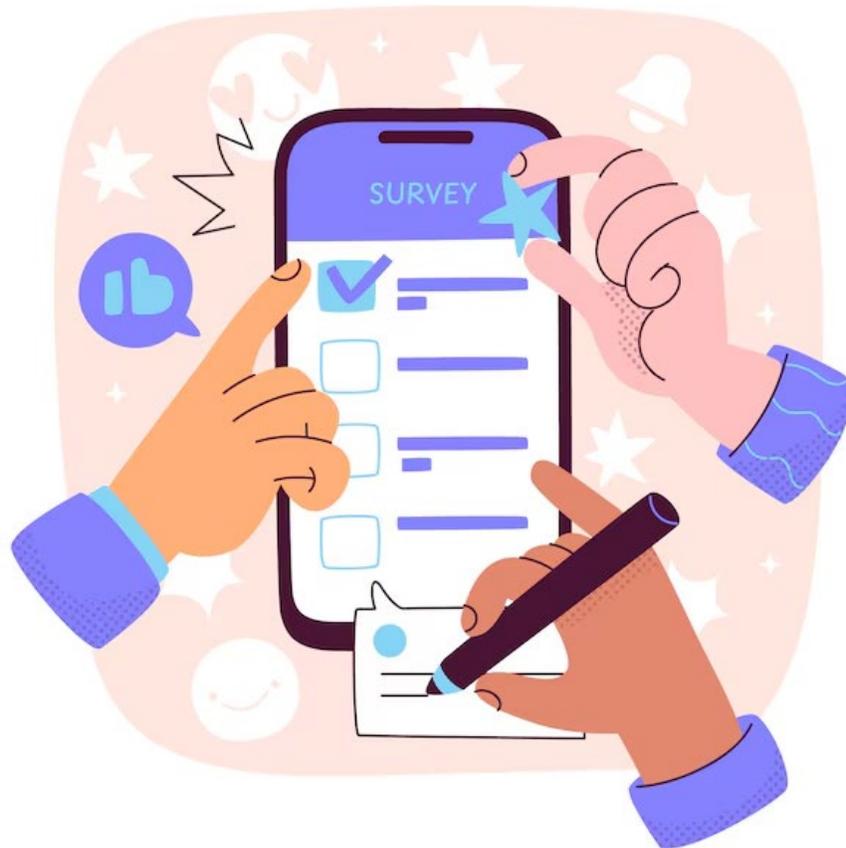
Caring Connections Durham

Building meaningful connections in everyday care

Caring Connections Durham (CCD) continues to make strong progress at Lakeview Manor. Over the past year, residents, families, staff and leaders have worked together to create and embed an emotional-based model of care focused on connection, dignity and relationships. Key milestones include extensive engagement sessions, the launch of resident and family-centred change ideas, and comprehensive training for frontline staff and leaders. Early wins are already visible: staff report increased confidence in relational care, families are more engaged as partners in care, and meaningful everyday moments are being intentionally built into routines, dining and activities.

As we move forward, CCD is entering an important next phase. Ontario Tech University is currently conducting post-testing at Lakeview Manor to evaluate the impact of the model on residents, families and staff. In addition, readiness assessments have now been completed across long-term care homes in the division. These findings are helping shape a staggered and tiered rollout of CCD across homes in 2026, beginning with Hillsdale Terraces.

Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute to this shared work. Your commitment is helping to build a more connected, compassionate care environment for all.



Seaton Village

Occupancy timeline update

The projected occupancy readiness date for our new long-term care home, Seaton Village in north Pickering, is currently planned for October 2026 but is subject to change. Admissions will then continue over an 85-day period, in accordance with the Ministry of Long-Term Care Fill Rate guidelines. This will be a very busy and important period for everyone involved.

Construction update

The building is approximately 68 per cent complete. Most mechanical and electrical systems are nearing completion and interior finishing components – such as, drywall, flooring, kitchen and laundry installations – are underway. These developments are helping to bring a clearer vision of the final building to life. Installation of the exterior façade is scheduled to begin in March, once insulation is fully completed.



The construction team continues to work diligently to mitigate any further delays and remains focused on achieving the October timeline. While there are still some challenges to work through, steady progress is being made. There is a significant amount of work to be completed over the next nine months in preparation for the Ministry of Long-Term Care occupancy inspection.

Regular updates will be provided as we continue toward occupancy. A Seaton Village email address has been set up to answer questions related to our new LTC home. Please send to SeatonVillageInfo@durham.ca.

Hillsdale Estates news

Volunteer Corner

Spring is right around the corner, which means that it's time to get involved with your community. Come and volunteer to gain great experiences and new friends along the way!

If you are thinking of becoming a volunteer, we can help get you started.

Visit durham.ca/LTCvolunteer to download a volunteer application. You can email your completed application to the home where you would like to volunteer, or drop it off at our front desk. We are currently looking for volunteers to fill the following positions:

- Gift shop assistant
- Special events and outings
- Daily program assistant
- Mail delivery
- One-to-one visiting

Volunteering is very rewarding and enriches the lives of our residents. Join us today – we need your help. As always, if you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, you can email Cladell Darmainie at cladell.darmainie@durham.ca or call her at (905) 579-1777 extension 6332.

National Volunteer Appreciation Week

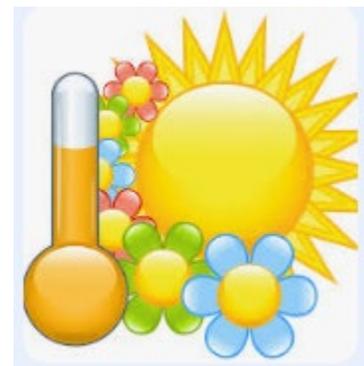
Did you know that April 19 to April 25 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week? The theme this year is “Ignite Volunteerism”. We are very thankful for the wonderful volunteers we have at Hillsdale Estates. They give their time and caring to so many of the residents who live in our home. **A big, warm thank you to you all!**

Recreation and Therapy

With warmer weather on the horizon, we are excited to welcome the start of a new season here in Recreation and Therapy Services. As spring arrives, our recreation calendars begin to shift with the sunshine. We look forward to getting back outdoors, feeling the sun on our faces, enjoying fresh air, and making the most of the beautiful months ahead.

We are committed to offering meaningful, engaging programs that reflect the interests and needs of the residents. Your feedback plays an important role in helping us continue to grow and improve. If you have ideas or suggestions about programs, please speak with any member of the team. We truly value your input.

Families and friends are always welcome to join any of our monthly programs. We understand how essential connection and companionship are and we are grateful for the important role you play in the lives of the residents.



To ensure calendars represent resident interests, each home area hosts a Monthly Calendar Planning Meeting. These meetings provide an opportunity for residents and their guests, if they wish, to share ideas and preferences for upcoming programs and events. Please be sure to check your home area's calendar for the date of the next planning meeting.



Donations of mobility devices

Please note that we cannot accept donations of mobility devices, including canes, wheelchairs, and walkers. Due to safety considerations and limited storage space, we unfortunately cannot accommodate these items. We appreciate your understanding.

Pet visitor reminders

We are pleased to welcome pet visitors, as they bring joy and comfort to many of the residents. To help us keep everyone safe, we kindly remind all pet visitors of the following:

- A completed Pet Visiting Form, including up-to-date vaccination records, is required for all visiting animals. Forms are available at reception.
- If you have previously submitted a form, please continue to provide updated vaccination records as they become available.
- Pets must be supervised at all times, appropriately restrained or on a short leash, and not permitted in community spaces.
- Pets are not allowed to visit any home area that is in an outbreak, nor may they visit the home if the entire home is under a declared outbreak.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, welcoming, and comfortable environment for everyone.

Nursing

Hillsdale Estates has a very diverse nursing department made up of Personal Support Workers (PSW), Registered Practical Nurses (RPN), Registered Nurses (RN), Resident Care Coordinators (RCC), Managers of Nursing Practice, Nurse Practitioners, RAI Coordinators, Infection Control Practitioners, an Assistant Director of Nursing and a Director of Nursing. All these people work together to ensure quality nursing services are provided for the residents who live here.

Our PSWs are our first point of contact. Every home area has PSWs who are responsible for a specific number of residents. PSW staff ensure that all resident care is documented electronically and are the first people who can help answer questions about care.

We have RPNs in each home area. In addition to medications and treatments, they are available to help answer questions about care, connect residents and families with the rest of the medical team and assess resident health needs in real time. They are the first people to talk to for help in managing day-to-day medical care.

We have RNs who are the nursing leaders on the home areas and are the next line of help. While there are more RNs on days than evenings and nights, the RN team is accountable for the overall direction of residents under their care. The scope of the RN includes care planning, regular care conferences, coordination with our doctors and nurse practitioners and managing health care emergencies.

Our RCCs are the managers of each of our floors in the home. RCCs oversee the nursing team and help address concerns and complaints that may arise from day to day. When issues aren't resolved by staff, the RCC is the next step in problem solving. The RCCs work with the Assistant Director of Care to help address and direct concerns to relevant departments in the home.

Hillsdale Estates is committed to providing an environment where residents live with dignity, security, safety and comfort while having their physical, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural needs met. We are not a hospital but we work to provide the best possible support that we can, empowering resident rights while balancing our obligations under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2022.

Social Work Week spotlight

Each year, communities and organizations across Canada take time in March to recognize the hard work, dedication, resilience and compassion of social workers. In Ontario, we honour these caring professionals during the first week of March (March 2 to 8). Social workers are on the frontlines of our recovery, providing vital support and guidance to those dealing with burnout, stress, trauma and anxiety.

Social work at Hillsdale Estates

- Provide 1:1 counselling with residents (e.g., self-care, coping, family dynamics, trauma, grief, depression, anxiety, and mood disorders).
- Ensure residents' rights are upheld and advocated for.
- Locate and arrange for resources inside and outside the home.
- Provide support to family members (e.g., coping with the pandemic, feeling guilt or anxiety with life changes).
- Support palliative and end-of-life care for residents and family members.

- Support, develop, and implement innovative programs for residents and families (e.g., support groups).
- Use specialized knowledge and skills related to communication, problem-solving, seniors' mental health, caregiver coping, and resources.
- Promote a positive atmosphere and help counteract stereotyping, stigmatization and discrimination.
- Adapt to changing resident and family needs as the social work role evolves to help meet those needs.

Social worker contact information:

- **Erika Gilbert, B.A., MSW, RSW** 4th floor, Apple Blossom, and Moonlight Bay
Erika.Gilbert@durham.ca / extension 6323.
- **Sherin Surenthiran, B.A., MSW, RSW** 3rd floor, Pineridge Place, and Trillium Trail
Sherin.Surenthiran@durham.ca / extension 6441.

***Please connect with a social worker for further info and/or support.

“This month’s Social Work Spotlight is a reminder that you’re never on your own here at Hillsdale Estates. Our social work team is always happy to chat—whether you have questions, need support, or just want to learn more about the resources available. It truly takes a village, and we’re grateful to be part of yours.” – From Erika & Sherin

Environmental Services

Earth Day is April 22 and the theme for 2026 is Our Power, Our Planet.

Simple things you can do to help protect the earth:

- Reduce, reuse, and recycle
- Volunteer for cleanups in your community
- Educate
- Conserve water
- Choose sustainable
- Shop wisely
- Use long-lasting lightbulbs
- Plant a tree
- Choose non-toxic chemicals in the home and office



Spring cleaning



The weather starts to warm up, grass starts to grow, the birds fly lower, and we no longer need the heavy winter clothing that takes up space in closets and drawers. Over the next few weeks, please consider packing away clothing that is no longer needed for the new season. We encourage residents to have these items stored with their families.

Please remember all new clothing items need to be labelled so they can be returned to you after laundering.



Furniture and supplies in resident rooms

Residents are encouraged to keep and display personal possessions, pictures and furnishings in their rooms. This is your home and, as in any home, it is important to have personal items that are special to you or make you feel more comfortable.

Prior to bringing in any electrical items or furniture, please contact Environmental Services at extension 6326. The Environmental Services team will ensure items are in good working order to ensure the safety of everyone living in the home.

Please note that extension cords are not permitted in resident rooms. CSA approved power bars with built-in breakers are the best option.

Please also be aware that air purifiers, humidifiers and aerosols are not permitted in resident rooms because they interfere with the facility's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system and fire suppression system.

Food Services

National Nutrition Month

The theme of Canada's National Nutrition Month in March 2026 is "Nourish to Flourish." Continuing from 2025, this theme supports deeper engagement by highlighting the vital role of dietitians in health and encouraging community-wide nourishment for thriving lives. Led by Dietitians of Canada, the theme "Nourish to Flourish" emphasizes supporting healthier choices for individuals, families and communities.



Administration

From the Business Office

The Business Office will be closed on Good Friday (April 3) and Easter Monday (April 6). If you require funds from your account, please visit the Business Office by Thursday, April 2.

2025 income tax/rate reduction

Don't forget—it's tax time! If families require a rate reduction, taxes need to be completed on time to receive the notice of assessment. The tax filing deadline for all Canadians is April 30, 2025, for the 2025 tax year.

Please connect with Mary-Anne Finlay or a member of the Business Office for further information.

Free tax clinic at Hillsdale Estates

We are excited to partner again with the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) through Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to host a free tax clinic at Hillsdale Estates. After last year's successful partnership, we are pleased to offer this clinic again. Tax returns will be completed by trained volunteers. Residents and caregivers are welcome to access the free tax clinic, provided they have a **simple tax situation**.



To register, please contact Mary-Anne Finlay, Senior Accounting Clerk, at ext. 6317 or email mary-anne.finlay@durham.ca by **March 17, 2026**. Registration is mandatory.

The tax clinic will be held on March 30 and 31, from 1 to 5, p.m. in the Hillsdale Estates auditorium.

If you have any questions or concerns, please connect with our social workers:

Trillium Trail, Pineridge Place and 3rd floor: Sherin Surenthiran extension 6441 or sherin.surenthiran@durham.ca.

Apple Blossom, Moonlight Bay and 4th floor: Erika Gilbert extension 6323 or Erika.gilbert@durham.ca.

Secured Home Area

Placement in our Secured Home Areas is determined by the interdisciplinary team in accordance with the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, and its regulations. Decisions are based on specific criteria and are guided by resident safety, clinical assessment and best practice standards.

Residents in secured areas are reviewed regularly. When a resident no longer meets the criteria for secure placement, the Home will proceed with an internal transfer to another Home Area, and families will be supported through the transition process.

If you have questions about secure placement, please contact the Nursing Leadership team.

Daylight Saving Time



March brings the promise of gardening and warmer, sunnier days, as the earth turns its frostbitten cheek to winter and springs forth from the vernal equinox. March is the first month of spring, which begins on March 20.

Don't forget to "spring forward" and set your clocks one hour ahead on March 8, as it is the start of Daylight Saving Time, which begins at 2 a.m.

The Regional Municipality of Durham
Social Services Department
Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors Division

Hillsdale Estates
590 Oshawa Boulevard North,
Oshawa, Ontario L1G 5T9
905-579-1777

durham.ca

 www.twitter.com/regionofdurham

 www.youtube.com/regionofdurham

 www.facebook.com/regionofdurham

