



December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Family Member,

### Temporary Enhanced Measures in Ontario Long-Term Care Homes

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Long-Term Care announced the implementation of temporary enhanced measures in light of the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

Effective December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, **general visitors** who are not fully vaccinated (or have a valid medical exemption) are restricted from entering the LTC home. Outdoor visits, where feasible, are still permitted for unvaccinated visitors.

Effective December 20<sup>th</sup>, to gain entry into the home, existing **caregivers** must show proof of their first dose (or have a valid medical exemption) and by February 21<sup>st</sup>, must show proof of all required doses. Partially vaccinated individuals are only permitted to visit with the resident in their room. New caregivers who are designated after December 14<sup>th</sup> are required to be fully vaccinated to gain entry into the home.

The above requirement does not apply with respect to a visitor or caregiver that is attending the home for palliative situations.

In Ontario, an individual is considered fully vaccinated if they have received the full series of COVID-19 vaccine and they received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.

Effective January 4<sup>th</sup>, you will be asked to present your QR code with valid government issue ID in order to prove vaccination status.

A maximum of 2 people (visitors and caregivers) may visit a resident at a time for indoor visits, and a maximum of 4 people (visitors and caregivers) per resident at a time for outdoor visits where feasible. Fully vaccinated caregivers may continue to join resident for communal dining while always remaining masked. No private family gatherings involving food will be permitted at this time.

Residents who are fully vaccinated may continue to leave the home for day absences. Upon return to the home the resident must be actively screened. In addition, the resident will undergo a rapid antigen test and PRC test on day 3 following the absence, followed by a PCR test on day 7.

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](http://www.durham.ca)

Social overnight absences are suspended at this time. Residents who wish to leave the home overnight for social purposes will need to follow the appropriate discharge process, as well as the re-admission protocol when they return at a later date.

Surveillance testing for all fully vaccinated staff, students and volunteers will be undertaken every other day, in addition to the daily testing for those who have received their second dose and are awaiting the 14 day period. Caregivers, general visitors and support workers, regardless of vaccination status, require proof of a negative test upon entry, taken the day of the visit. Testing is also required for outdoor visits.

While I realize these changes may have a negative impact on your holiday plans, these temporary enhanced and responsive measures are necessary to provide optimal safety and support to residents while balancing the mental and emotional well-being of residents and their families, and to safeguard the staff who are critical to the care of residents.

In addition to the enhanced measures, all residents, staff and caregivers are strongly urged to receive a booster/third dose as they become eligible, as the latest available evidence shows that three doses of vaccine are more effective against the Omicron variant than two doses.

I would also like to remind you of the importance of remaining vigilant with public health measures, such as masking and social distancing, both in the home and in the community.

We will continue to provide updates as we receive announcements from the Ministry of Health and/or the Public Health.

If you have any questions about anything in this update, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or to a member of the management team at the long-term care home.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Laura MacDermaid*