



**The Regional
Municipality
of Durham**

Social Services
Department

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Dear Family Member,

[Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update](#)

[LTC Homes COVID-19 Status](#)

There are no confirmed active COVID-19 cases in any of our homes and all homes continue to follow the directive issued by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC), and guidance from Public Health.

[OMICRON Variant](#)

Our homes are working closely with our local Public Health Department and the Ministry of Long-Term Care to monitor the situation with the Omicron variant. We have recently changed our screening protocols when entering the buildings to inquire about travel to countries with an Omicron related travel ban. All travellers who have been in the 10 identified countries in Africa in the 14 days before travelling to Canada will be subject to enhanced testing, screening, and quarantine measures. As such, anyone who has travelled to these countries (and any other country identified by the federal government), regardless of vaccination status, is not permitted to enter a long-term care home until they are released from quarantine by the federal government, as they are not permitted to leave their place of quarantine. This includes people intending to visit palliative residents. The ministry continues to actively monitor the evolving situation.

[Increase in Community Numbers](#)

On Dec 2nd, Durham Region Health Department announced the first case of the Omicron variant in the Durham Region. With an increase in the active cases of COVID-19 in our local community, I would like to remind everyone to please remain vigilant when it comes to protecting yourself and others— please ensure to wear your mask and socially distance from others. We encourage all essential caregivers to please consider getting your 3rd dose booster shot for COVID-19. We also encourage all essential caregivers and visitors to get the annual influenza vaccination. Please do not visit if you are sick.

[Mandatory Vaccination](#)

As of December 13th, all staff, volunteers, students, and support workers entering the home for the purpose of work must have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination. Those who have not received both doses will be placed on an administrative leave of absence.

Rapid Antigen Testing

For all visitors who are not fully vaccinated (14 days past the second dose), a rapid antigen test is required each day you visit the home. Effective December 6th, all individuals who are required to be RA tested must do so upon entry to the home and must wait at the clinic until a negative result is obtained. If you are fully vaccinated and selected for a random RA test, you are not required to wait for the test result.

Holiday Gatherings

This holiday season, each LTC home will be offering families and visitors the opportunity to reserve an event space within the LTC home to partake in a small gathering. Families may use this space for social gathering, which includes the sharing of a meal. Families and visitors may bring a meal in to share with the resident in these event spaces, however the homes will not be providing meal tickets. To align with our community, families and visitors gathering in these event spaces must be fully vaccinated. Additionally, those who intend to bring food in and share in a meal, will be required to have a rapid antigen test upon arrival, and wait the 15 minutes for the test results. Attendees will be required to maintain social distance during these gatherings and must always wear a mask unless partaking in eating or drinking. Resident Home Areas that are in outbreak or residents that are currently in isolation, will not be permitted to gather in these spaces. Event spaces are limited and must be booked in advance. Families must sign a booking agreement. Each home will provide direction on how to book event spaces. Please call Reception and staff will direct your call. Families and visitors who wish to not book an event space, may continue to visit the resident under the Region of Durham's current visiting policy.

Holiday Season Gifts

Many families like to show an expression of thanks to staff during the holiday season. Staff are not permitted to accept individual gifts. Like last year, families and visitors are asked to not bring food and drink in for staff. In lieu of food or drink, please consider a card or a donation to a local food bank. Our staff work very hard to keep residents safe. Taking the time to share a simple "thank you" goes a long way. There are no restrictions on gifts for residents as it relates to COVID-19.

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