

March 30, 2020

COVID19: OARC Supports Latest Emergency Order

Dear residents and long-term care team members,

We are entering a severe situation requiring crisis measures in our LTC homes. We were living and working in a human health resource shortage BEFORE COVID-19 came upon us, so we are now finding ourselves, in many areas of the province, desperate for staff members to carry out even the basic, essential care needs for residents. This is a serious time that calls for serious measures.

On Saturday March 27, the Ontario government released an emergency order that gives the Licensees/Administrators of our long-term care homes the ability to have optimal flexibility in resolving staffing issues, decrease reporting and documentation regimes and channel resources, all in an effort to respond to, prevent and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19. This order is in effect for 14 days and can be renewed through Provincial Cabinet once. Therefore, the following month is covered through this emergency order.

OARC is supportive of, and thankful for the emergency order. Some of the highlights include:

- All homes are still required to maintain a safe and secure environment for residents and staff/team members
- Secondary, more administrative reporting measures have been suspended, thus releasing time to direct care (critical incidents and mandatory reports under the Long-Term Homes Care Act (2007) are still required)
- Documentation is no longer required. So often, team members are pulled away from resident care due to documentation requirements. This has been removed, so that team members are able to carry out their working responsibilities with residents without the need to document.
 - Documentation of significant nature that ensures the safe and proper care of a resident is still required, but all subsidiary, secondary, non-essential documentation can be abandoned for the duration of this order

- Homes are not required to post any information except essential information such as material related to COVID-19
- Regarding staffing, Licensees/Administrators may fill positions in the LTC home with the person who, in their reasonable opinion, has the adequate skills, training and knowledge to perform the duties required of that position.
 - Clinical care that can only be provided by registered staff within their scope of practice, such as applies to medication administration is still applicable
 - Clinical care that requires consultation with a Registered Nurse or Nurse Practitioner is still expected, even if a Registered Nurse or Nurse Practitioner is accessed virtually
 - Care that is provided by non-registered staff, such as personal support workers, will be determined by the Licensee who now has the responsibility to fill positions with persons who have the adequate skills, training and knowledge to perform the role
 - Training and mandatory education that is required for new volunteers and staff members is suspended. Only essential training that relates to the duties that that person is brought in to perform are required.
 - Example: if the LTC home is in need of some team members to work in the kitchen preparing food, and a line-cook from a local restaurant is available, the licensee can determine if that line-cook has reasonable skills to be effective and efficient in the role of a cook in the LTC environment
 - Example: volunteers may be brought on board to help in non-clinical, non-direct care services such as stocking shelves, assisting with meal delivery, wiping surfaces, portering residents, making beds, assisting residents with technology to maintain connection with family members, etc.
- LTC homes are not required to hold care conferences or execute full physical examinations with residents during this emergency order
- The process of admission, transfer and discharge of persons has some flexibility and directness now, that by-passes processes that take a significant amount of resources (time and human). **The overarching principle here is that CONSENT IS ALWAYS REQUIRED.** No one will be forced to make a move, or transition into long-term care without consent.

- It is important to note that long-term care residents will NOT be asked to vacate their bed.

To read the complete emergency order, click here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200329COVID19reg2020.0201.e04.pdf>

Other items of information for your consideration:

- The Ministry of LTC employs 175 inspectors. These professionals are now deployed to the home level as consultants. They are to be ‘hands on’ helpers to homes that require additional assistance, surveying for human resource needs and personal protective equipment needs. Perhaps the inspectors will assist with necessary Administrative tasks, screening and interviewing of prospective new employees and volunteers, etc.
- Together, OARC with AdvantAge Ontario, the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), Ontario Long Term Care Clinicians, Family Councils Ontario (FCO) have co-authored a letter of support for the emergency order of March 27th, 2020. **Link to letter here:**
<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/20200330JointLetterOnEmergencyOrder0324.pdf>

A Message from Your Ministry of LTC:

Residents should raise concerns with their care providers, home Administrators, as well as OARC (who can in turn relay information directly to the Minister’s office) if they feel care is not being adequately met. The Ministry and OARC continue to work collaboratively to ensure that resident care is adequately maintained during these unprecedented times.