

March 31, 2020

COVID19: New Direction from Ontario Government

Dear residents and long-term care team members,

Courage. That's what I comes to mind when I think of you.

Having courage doesn't mean that you're not afraid. The definition of courage is "the ability to do something that frightens one" or "strength in the face of pain or grief." You are human. You may be nervous. You may be scared. The past few weeks have stripped us all of our egos, our positions, our differences and have brought us to common ground. Human kindness, creativity and love have flourished in ways that otherwise may have gone untapped, all in the face of tremendous uncertainty. That is courage, and that is YOU! Thank you, residents and long-term care team members for your example of courage – one that I hope will sustain us now and lead the way for lasting change for the future.

New Direction from Ontario Government:

On March 30, the Ontario government issued a new directive to long-term care homes to provide additional measures to protect residents and staff (team members) from COVID-19. Here are some highlights of that document:

- Long-term care homes must immediately engage in active screening of all staff, essential visitors AND residents. This screening process must be done twice each day (beginning and end of shift, beginning and end of day for residents) and involve taking of temperature and symptom screening (does the person have cough, shortness of breath etc.)
- All new admissions or re-admissions must be placed in self-isolation for 14 days
- Residents are not permitted to go on short-stay trips with family and friends. If visiting commences, visits must be carried out on the long-term care home property and everyone must maintain safe physical distancing.
- Essential visitors are permitted. These people include those who are visiting a gravely ill resident and those who are performing essential support services such as food delivery, maintenance and other health care services. If the visitor visits a resident who has COVID-19 the visitor must wear appropriate personal protective

equipment. If the person is visiting a resident(s) who does not have COVID-19, he/she must wear a mask.

- Employers should wherever possible, limit the number of work locations that employees are working at to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Resident cohorting: physical distancing of 2 metres between people is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition, some additional practices include the use of alternative accommodation in the home to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres, resident cohorting of the well and unwell, utilizing respite and palliative care beds and rooms, or utilizing other rooms as appropriate (some homes may have to re-purpose spiritual care rooms, activity rooms etc., in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak). Environmental cleaning is important; cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- If a resident has COVID-19 that person must be isolated in a single room if possible. Staff must take appropriate contact and droplet precautions.
- If an outbreak is declared in a long-term care home, new resident admissions are not allowed, and there will be no re-admission of residents until the outbreak is over. Additionally, if residents are taken by family out of the home, the resident must not be readmitted until the outbreak is over.
- Administrators must keep staff and residents informed about COVID-19, including appropriate signage.
- Any food or product that is delivered must be dropped in an identified area and active screening of delivery personnel should be done prior to allowing them to enter the home.

To view Directive #3, please click here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200331UpdatedCMOHDirective3LTCH.pdf>