

April 15, 2020

COVID19: New Emergency Order Regarding Staff Working at Multiple Sites

Dear residents and long-term care team members,

Thank you for your courage in these challenging times of COVID-19. Thank you for instilling trust in each other so that to the best of your abilities, both residents and team members are feeling supported. Thank you, team members, for taking the time to connect with residents at every possible opportunity so that they are protected from loneliness and feelings of isolation. This is an unprecedented time, one that we will learn valuable lessons from, that we will be able to re-shape and re-define what true person-centred care needs to look like. We will get through this together!

I want to share with you a few developments concerning the management of COVID-19 in your LTC homes.

New Emergency Order Regarding Staff Working at Multiple Sites:

Of greatest urgency is the new Emergency Order, just recently registered with the Registrar of Regulations, that states that health care workers are permitted to work in one place; no longer are your team members permitted to work at multiple sites. This is a welcomed directive. You may view the full order for single site here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200415OReg146-20.pdf> and, the

amendment to LTCHA here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200415OReg147-20.pdf>

Here are some highlights from this emergency order:

- April 17, 2020 an employee of a long-term care home providers must inform their employers if they are working at multiple long-term care homes, retirement homes or any other health service providers
- April 22, 2020 an employee of a long-term care home provider will cease working at multiple sites
- April 22, 2020 long-term care home providers must be in compliance of this order and ensure employees are not working at multiple sites

Clarification on Resident Cohorting:

Directive #3 gives orders regarding staff and resident cohorting. To view the complete document, click here: <http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/Number2.pdf> LTC homes must use staff and resident cohorting to prevent the spread of COVID-19. What does this mean? Cohorting of well residents and unwell residents is an important step in reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. This is a temporary arrangement whereby residents will be moved to different rooms in different locations of the LTC home to best protect everyone; separating those with a diagnosis of COVID-19, and those without. This is very difficult because there is little opportunity to move personal belongings with the resident who is moving to a different location from their regular, permanent room. We empathize with you, if you are a resident who must move, and we encourage you and your team to work together to ensure that this is as comfortable of a transition as possible. Perhaps you can take a few special things with you. Remember, this is temporary, it is a necessary step in protecting each and every resident, yourself included. It is also for the greater good in providing an area in your home that is better equipped to work with residents with a diagnosis of COVID-19. Thank you for relinquishing the comforts of your familiar belongings, your familiar setting, your familiar team members. This must be very unsettling for you. If you are a resident who has moved, please consider contacting OARC, as we would be interested in sharing your story broadly to our sector partners.

Directives Concerning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

On April 10, the Ontario government issued Directive #5 which speaks to how LTC homes must act with regards to PPE. To view the full document, click here: <http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/Number3.pdf> Some of the precautions and procedures that are to be immediately followed are:

- LTC homes, health care workers and other employees must engage on the conservation and stewardship of PPE. This equipment is valuable and in high demand in our LTC homes, so it is imperative that each and every piece of equipment be used properly. Proper training must be provided so that all staff members understand the importance of stewardship and know how to use their equipment in a safe and effective manner including how to put it on and take it off safely.
- While there are Ministry of Health avenues to pursue in obtaining PPE, LTC homes must explore all available avenues to obtain and maintain a sufficient supply of equipment. Keeping track of a PPE inventory on an ongoing basis is essential.
- If it seems that there will be a shortage of PPE, the employer, government and unions are to work together to develop contingency plans that ensure that employees are safe.
- When working with a resident with suspected, presumed or confirmed COVID-19, employees must wear contact and droplet precaution equipment i.e. gloves, face

shields or goggles, gowns, and surgical/procedure masks. This is a minimum requirement.

- Before every interaction between a health care worker and a resident, an assessment of risk is performed. If the assessment determines that certain health and safety measures are required, the LTC home must provide the health care worker with access to proper equipment. i.e. The LTC home will not unreasonably deny access to the appropriate PPE.
- Whether or not the LTC home has any COVID-19 cases, EVERY staff member or essential visitor is to wear surgical/procedure masks at all times for the duration of full shifts or visits. During breaks, masks may be removed, but the person must remain 2 meters minimum from any other person.

Memo from Ministry of Health to Health System Organizations and Providers:

On April 13, the Ministry of Health shared valuable updates regarding efforts in fighting COVID-19. To view the entire document, click here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/Number4.pdf> Highlights include:

- There have been several requests for additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) made to the government in recent days. The Ministry's Emergency Operations Centre (MEOC) responded to EVERY request within 24 hours resulting in swift action this past weekend - 102 LTC homes and 16 retirement homes received supplies.
- Implementation plans for further testing in LTC homes: Ontario Health has been working with sector partners to ensure that LTC homes have what they need to implement the updated testing guidance that included increased testing of residents, staff/team members and essential visitors for COVID-19.

LTC Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

On April 10, the Ontario government shared a list of frequently asked questions in the LTC sector and corresponding answers. To view the complete document, click here:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/Number5.pdf> Highlights of this document include:

- What do I do if our LTC home has a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE)?
 - Work with their regular supplier
 - Work with other local health care providers
 - Send a request for PPE to the Regional Table Lead (there are 5 regional leads in Ontario)
 - Notify their Ministry inspector
 - Contact the Ministry's Emergency Operations Centre by email

- What happens if a resident’s family removes them from a home during an outbreak?
 - Residents are not permitted to come back to their LTC home during an outbreak, so with COVID-19, the resident may be away from their LTC home for several months
 - The resident, after outbreak, is placed on top priority for re-admission to their LTC home
- How will congregate dining be affected by the announcement prohibiting gatherings of more than 5 people?
 - Homes are asked to limit gatherings. Perhaps homes can provide staggered dining i.e. offering meals at various times thus reducing the total number of residents in the dining rooms at one time.

New Resource: Boredom Busters for Residents:

In an effort to minimize boredom and loneliness for residents living in long-term care during this challenging time, the Ontario CLRI at Bruyère and iGen Ottawa have put together a list of online resources for recreation therapists and recreation professionals to use in programming for residents. A lot has changed about day-to-day life in long-term care and we hope this list will provide some inspiration. To view this document please click here: <https://clri-ltc.ca/files/2020/04/BOREDOM-BUSTERS-FOR-LTC-1.pdf>

Ontario Association of Residents’ Councils & Family Councils Ontario Webinar:

In response to the high demand and interest in the webinar scheduled for Wednesday April 15th titled, “Courageously Living Through COVID-19 Together: Residents and Families” a second, repeat webinar, will be offered on Tuesday April 28th at 2 pm. To learn more about the webinar and to register please visit our website here: <http://www.ontarc.com/covid-19-updates.html>

Communication Resource Coming:

Communication is essential to navigating through this COVID-19 crisis and being equipped to decipher between fact and fiction. The Ministry of Health, through Directive #3 mandated that all LTC homes must communicate information about COVID-19 to residents, families and staff. Sometimes it’s difficult to know what to say, how much information to give and what topics to cover. OARC is working on a resource to assist Administrators in knowing which 4-5 topics related to COVID-19 are top of mind for residents. This tool will be available soon, and we trust it will guide homes in their communication efforts and requirements in sharing updates with residents.

OARC's team and Board of Directors continues to hold all residents and their team members and families in their hearts. Knowing you are living the truth of this pandemic inspires us to continue in our work. Our Board members are residents living in LTC homes across Ontario. We meet regularly and they share what is on their hearts and minds. If they're thinking it, so are you. We know this is tough on you. We know you miss your families, your loved ones and the joy of human connection. We know you sometimes feel isolated, fearful and anxious. WE know you want answers and you want our Ministry to lead us through this pandemic with excellence and protection for all. We are here for you. Please reach out to us so we can do this together. We will get through this TOGETHER!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dee Lender". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dee Lender
Executive Director, OARC