

May 15, 2020

COVID-19: Visiting Update, Mandatory Management Order, Emotional Support and LIVE Webinar with Ministry of Long-Term Care Representatives

Dear residents and long-term care team members,

We are 9 weeks into this journey of moving through the COVID-19 pandemic together. I want residents across Ontario to know that OARC is working every day to support you, and to ensure that your voice is heard.

When will visiting resume?

COVID-19 is relentless and pervasive. It is highly contagious and many LTC homes have residents and team members who have become infected with the virus. Your safety is first priority. That said, many of you have been living the past 7-9 weeks in isolation. You may be cohorted with others to a different section of your LTC home, and as a consequence, may be away from most of your personal belongings. Many residents are living each day with very little human connection, and no visits from family, friends and co-residents. You are missing them, and they are missing you. It's difficult, and it's painful, and one has to wonder what the outcome will be to the psychosocial and emotional wellbeing of all concerned. The ambiguity of the situation can lead to further distress; how long will this last?

I want you to know that OARC is advocating for the restoration of clear and targeted support for your psychosocial and emotional wellbeing. Our government cares too. On May 13th, I spoke directly with senior leaders in the Ministry of Health and Ministry of LTC, along with Family Councils Ontario. Together we spoke of how a 'new normal' might look in terms of visiting amongst residents and between families and residents, and what first steps might look like.

Let me be clear. I am **not** advocating that the doors of your homes be swung open, permitting an abundance of visiting. We're not ready for that. As our society (economy and infrastructure) begins to re-open SLOWLY, with caution and commitment to ongoing safety for all, so also should we be examining ways to move forward in our fragile LTC sector. It's important for you to know that your health is important to those who care for you; family, friends, stakeholder organizations (including OARC), the care teams who support you, and our government. And it is important for you to know that there will be a

plan that balances safety and access, informed by data (testing, infection control practices) and our messaging on your behalf with our government. Within a few days, the testing of all residents and team members in all LTC homes in Ontario will be complete. That is an important first step, one that will inform decisions and strategies to work towards connecting people once again.

NEW: Mandatory Management Order:

On May 13 the Ontario government announced another layer of support for LTC homes struggling to contain the spread of COVID-19 in these extraordinary times. Called a Mandatory Management Order, this provision allows for the government to use “rapid, immediate and effective management alternatives to protect residents and staff within a home.” (Government of Ontario Press Release May 13). In effect, the government has the authority to call in a hospital or corporate manager to provide leadership to the home in navigating through COVID-19 containment. To read the full press release, **click here:**

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200513PRLTCManagementSupport.pdf>



Traditionally, a management order is placed on a home as a punitive/corrective measure to ensuring compliance when chronic non-compliance is evident, when there is a history of management resistance, negligence or incompetence. During my conversation with our government on May 13, I obtained clarification about this Order.

Principally, the order is intended to provide support and guidance to homes that are in desperate need, where leaders are exhausted, fatigued and under-resourced. A home may be experiencing:

- a high number of cases among residents and team members
- a high number of deaths
- an unresolved outbreak
- significant issues with number of team members available to work
- outstanding requirements from infection prevention and control assessments.

For certain, the order will be imposed if a home’s management team is indeed neglectful, incompetent or resistant to providing the best care for residents, but the order is also in place to provide shoulder to shoulder support to management teams who are fatigued and need relief.

NICE: Emotional Support for Seniors:

The National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) is an international network of researchers, practitioners, students and seniors dedicated to improving the care of older adults, both in Canada and abroad. Recognizing the harmful effects of older adults living lives in isolation, NICE has developed a free, over the phone support program. The goal is to connect older adults with social workers and social work students to provide essential support now and after the enforced isolation has been lifted. The program is called TALK2NICE and is available for older adults living in the community and residential care settings such as long-term care.



For more information about the TALK2NICE Program, please visit: www.nicenet.ca or contact Jason Ferreirinha, Program Manager, TALK2NICE, NICE Jason.Ferreirinha@mail.utoronto.ca, 416-970-6857

Ontario Long-Term Care Inspection Program During COVID-19:

OARC is pleased to announce that on June 10 from 2 to 3 pm we will host a live webinar with the Operations Branch of our Ministry of LTC. Guest speaker, Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division will cover:

- LTC Inspection Program During COVID-19
- Role of Inspectors
- Emergency Management Order

We will have a live Q & A period and, in advance of the webinar, please contact me with any questions you have related to the above topics, as they will help to guide the content of the webinar. I can be reached at dlender@ontarc.com or 1-800-532-0201 x 240

This webinar will be of interest to residents of long-term care homes, team members, family members and other supporters of residents living in long-term care homes.

Register Here: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/1094079347752667394>

Your OARC team is thinking of you!

Best wishes,

Dee Lender