

December 9, 2021

Holiday Guidance, Updates to LTC Screening and Surveillance Testing, Suspension of Accommodation Co-payment Increases and Anticipated Legislative Changes for LTC Act

Dear Residents, Long-Term Care Team Members and Supportive Partners,

As always, we strive to keep residents informed as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and related guidance from our government which may impact your day-to-day life and experiences in your homes. This bulletin also contains some information on:

- Safely celebrating the 2021 holiday season
- COVID screening and surveillance testing
- Your LTC room (accommodation) rates
- Staying connected with OARC through the holiday season with our weekly Resident Forums
- Anticipated changes to our LTC legislation

We encourage you to bring these pertinent announcements forward to Residents' Council leaders for further dissemination and discussion as proactively as possible. We ask that any team members, home leadership, friends or family of residents receiving this bulletin consider printing and/or passing along this information to residents.

[Celebrate Safely this Holiday Season!](#)

In recognition of the current festive season, coupled with remembering last year's limited opportunities for residents, families and team members, OARC asked for Ministry guidance on safe celebratory activities in LTC homes.

Earlier today, that message came from Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister of LTC Policy and Pandemic Response. In consultation with Dr. Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), Erin informed homes that (subject to any different direction from your local public health unit), homes "can and should strive to hold celebrations and holiday services/events that are as normal as possible." She continues by saying that while existing COVID protection requirements and directives need to be followed, homes are 'strongly encouraged to find ways to include residents in planning and preparing for

holiday celebrations including sharing traditional recipes, making decorations, helping to organize events, etc.”

Specifically, Erin encourages LTC teams to set the stage for:

- Decorating
- Receiving gifts and care packages
- Enjoying holiday foods
- Attending religious services, rites or ceremonies

We wish you a very happy holiday season! **You will find Erin’s complete guidance message listed in the second portion of her full memo [here](#).**

[Updates to LTC Screening and Minister’s Directive on Surveillance Testing](#)

Today, Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister of LTC Policy and Pandemic Response communicated with all LTC homes with regards to screening, testing and restrictions related to the evolving situation with the new COVID-19 Variant of Concern (VOC), Omicron. You may access this information in the first portion of her full memo [here](#). Some highlights include:

- Anyone who is required to quarantine by the Government of Canada (and all members of their household) is not permitted to enter a LTC home until their quarantine is lifted
- Any resident who travels outside of Canada, and returns to their LTC home, must be permitted entry, isolated and tested for COVID-19 as per provincial requirements
- Anyone who has traveled outside of Canada (including the USA) within the last 14 days must undergo rapid antigen testing prior to entering a LTC home, regardless of their vaccination status.

[Update on Accommodation Co-payment Rate Increases – Suspension of Increases until October 1, 2022.](#)

Every year, the amount each resident (or their designated financial contact) will pay for their room in their respective LTC home increases incrementally. You may recall from last year that the pandemic has impacted this schedule slightly. On December 3, 2021, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Long-Term Care Operations released a letter and co-payment bulletin outlining the suspension of co-payment increases until October 1, 2022. The letter also clarified that residents who are currently on the LTC Rate Reduction Program will not be impacted by this change as their reduced rate is based on what they can afford. Residents will be required to reapply when the current Rate Reduction cycle expires on June 30, 2022. **Read the ADM Letter [here](#). Access the Co-Payment bulletin [here](#).**

Note: In keeping with the direction laid out in the Long-Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA, 2007), you can anticipate that your LTC home will give all residents and their substitute decision makers 30 days written notice before any changes will come into effect. Feel free to direct any questions regarding your LTC accommodation fees to your home's Office Manager, Administrator, or another trusted team member.

[Stay Connected with Resident Peers this Holiday Season](#)

Last year, we paused our [Resident Forums](#) over the holidays. Through recent consultation with residents, we heard loud and clear how much they value these weekly opportunities to connect and share, and based on this valuable resident feedback, OARC resident leaders who serves as our weekly Forum Facilitators are committed to keep these weekly meetings going to maintain this special space for connection.

OARC Resident Forums are offered every Thursday at 2pm. **All LTC residents are welcome and encouraged to drop in and join us.** Hear what's happening in other LTC homes across the province – share innovative program ideas, ask questions, discuss challenges, bring your lived experience in LTC and explore new opportunities – as peers.

For residents, by residents, these weekly Forums are a great place to meet new friends and learn from residents and Residents' Council leaders. Connection is important now more than ever before.

We hope to see and hear from new and returning residents in the coming weeks!

Upcoming Forum dates:

- December 16, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- December 30, 2021
- January 6, 2022

How to get connected:

Using the *Zoom platform* on a computer, smart phone or tablet, you can join us using this meeting link: <https://zoom.us/j/9884879139?pwd=RjdaNmwxTzVLMmk2Wlp1QkVaQ1MxUT09>

Clicking the link should automatically launch you into the Forum waiting room, however, if you are prompted to enter any additional information, you can enter the following:

1. Meeting ID: 988 487 9139
2. Passcode: Resident

To join our recurring Resident Forum Meeting from a telephone:

1. Dial our toll-free phone-in option 1-888 475 4499
2. Enter our Meeting ID: 988 487 9139
3. Enter our Passcode: 93606329

[The Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act, 2021 Receives Royal Assent](#)

Today, the proposed new legislation for Ontario long-term care and retirement homes received royal assent.

According to the announcement, this new legislation will repeal the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* and replace it with the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*, which helps improve long-term care by:

- Establishing in law the commitment to provide an average of four hours of direct care per resident per day by March 31, 2025, with increasing interim goals to increase care
- Establishing new compliance and enforcement tools, including doubling the fines on the conviction of an offence
- Strengthening the Residents' Bill of Rights to align with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and recognizing the important and ongoing role caregivers play in resident health and well-being

You may access the full Ontario Government News Release [here](#).

Note: The *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021* does not become “law” today - this will be done at a later date upon proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor. This means that we will continue to follow our current legislation, the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*— including the current version of the Residents' Bill of Rights.

OARC is committed to working with government and stakeholders in the development of regulations that support this new Act in the coming weeks. We look forward to keeping you informed of the outcomes and the direct implications for residents and supportive partners as we embark on this important consultation work.

Yours sincerely,



Dee Tripp (formerly Lender)
OARC Executive Director