
February 4, 2022

Plan for Easing of Restrictions and Ministry Webinar for Residents

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

Yesterday afternoon, with great anticipation, we received a [memo](#) from Associate Deputy Minister LTC Pandemic Response, Erin Hannah, providing a thorough update on some important next steps as the Ministry moves forward and begins to ease some of the restrictions that were put into place in LTC homes on December 28th. This cautious and phased approach was developed in consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) in the context of the broader reopening of Ontario.

This bulletin will help to highlight for residents (as well as their families/friends and teams) what changes they can expect to see in the coming weeks, contingent on the absence of concerning trends in public health and health care indicators.

Effective this Monday, February 7th:

- The maximum **number of designated essential caregivers per resident will be increased from 2 to 4.**
- Continue with limit of 2 visitors (currently only essential caregivers) at a time, per resident.
- **Social day absences may resume** for residents who have at least three COVID-19 doses, while supporting these residents with information about the benefits of limiting contact with others, including avoiding large social gatherings, following masking and physical distancing, and only being in close contact with people who have had three COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Targeting February 21, 2022:

- **Resume all general visitors 5 years and older** who have had at least two COVID-19 doses (children under 5 years still restricted except infants 12 months or younger).
- **Increase limits on the number of visitors** (including caregivers) that may visit a resident at one time from 2 to 3.
- **Expand social day absences to all residents**, regardless of vaccination status.

- **Resume social overnight absences** for residents who have had at least three COVID-19 doses

Note: With the resumption of general visitors into the homes, this will also allow for the resumption of adult day programs, entertainers, and personal care services in the homes. Social group activities should remain as small groups (i.e., up to 10).

Targeting March 14, 2022:

- **Resume visits by general visitors under 5 years old.** No vaccination requirements for those under the age of 5.
- **Increase limit on the number of visitors** (including caregivers) at a time per resident to 4.
- **Allow social overnight absences for all residents** regardless of vaccination status

Note: surveillance testing requirements per the most recent testing directive dated December 17, 2021, for all team members (staff), caregivers and visitors continue to be in place.

Changes to Ministry of Health Guidance

The Ministry has been working closely with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health on updates to the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for public health units. Revised guidance was released to public health units yesterday and includes updates to the confirmed outbreak definition, management of contacts, cohorting during outbreaks, and protocols for admissions and transfers. **Some key updates include:**

- guidance regarding continuing activities for non-impacted residents while one section of the home is in outbreak;
- activities for those in isolation;
- reduction in the isolation time required by those who are in close contact;
- clarity to the definition of outbreaks as it relates to staff cases.

You can access the updated Guidance Document [here](#).

Easing Pandemic Restrictions: Special Webinar with Ministry Guests for Residents and Residents' Council Leaders - Thursday, February 10th at 10 am

The OARC team is excited to share that for the first time our Ministry partners will be offering a webinar specifically for our resident audience to help support a full and consistent understanding of the ongoing easing of restrictions. This is a special opportunity for residents to hear first-hand from government representatives and have your questions addressed about the phased plan to move forward and its implications.

This session is open to **all residents** and their supportive partners. Residents' Council leaders from throughout your LTC homes are strongly encouraged to attend the live session or tune into the recording that will be circulated following the session. To support your understanding of the changes and in preparation for the webinar, you may consider looking at this reference document titled, "[What Residents Can Expect.](#)"

Join the Zoom Webinar directly on Thursday, February 10th at 10 am:

From your computer <https://zoom.us/j/99360507718> or by telephone 1-888-475-4499

Successful Resident Forum with Ministry Guest

Yesterday afternoon OARC hosted a special extended Resident Forum where ADM Erin Hannah was an invited guest. In this private, resident-led session, Erin was able to hear directly from a group of residents from LTC's across Ontario who shared how the pandemic has impacted their lives. The Forum ended with a discussion of ideas and next steps that might be explored to bring about positive changes in the lives of residents.

Following the session, OARC Resident Leader, Gale Ramsden, who facilitated the Resident Forum expressed that she came away from the Forum feeling:

- **Encouraged** – about this new and continued dialogue with Ministry partners
- **Hopeful** – that there will be a shift in the mindset of society as well as government about LTC
- **Grateful** – that we had this opportunity to host this special Forum and that residents were willing to share openly and candidly
- **Supported** – by those who made it happen and those committed to bringing about meaningful change

Ontario LTC residents are looking forward to continuing this conversation, staying informed and contributing to future decisions about LTC and being part of solutions to precipitate a new path for our sector.

Yours sincerely,



Dee Tripp (formerly Lender)
Executive Director, OARC

The French version of the Bulletin will be posted on the OARC website soon after distribution (<https://www.ontarc.com/communications/bulletins.html>).