
June 20, 2022

Residents' Council Assistant Forums, COVID-19 Fourth Vaccine Dose Guidance and Masking in Long-Term Care Homes

Residents' Council Assistant Forums

Last month, OARC hosted a special virtual Forum bringing together Residents' Council Assistants (RCA's). These team members play an essential role in supporting Residents' Council operations in long-term care homes across the province. Similar to our weekly Resident Forums, this initial RCA Forum proved to be a highly engaging experience, giving participating RCA's an opportunity to share what's working well in their homes and bring forward questions, challenges and areas requiring additional support.

We are pleased to share that we will be hosting RCA Forums on the last Tuesday of every month at 1:30pm moving forward to keep you feeling connected, informed, inspired and well-supported.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming Forums offered through OARC's Zoom platform:

- June 28 - 1:30 PM
- July 26 - 1:30 PM
- August 30 - 1:30 PM
- September 27 - 1:30 PM

To Join Our Forums:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89779308644?pwd=R3NWaERFT3YzMW8wR0grRnFHSUdTQT09>

Meeting ID: 897 7930 8644

Passcode: Assistant

Option: [Click here](#) to download and import meeting dates directly to your Outlook calendar.

We hope you will plan to join us or encourage the RCA at your home to attend!

COVID-19 Vaccine: Fourth Doses for Residents

On June 15th, Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister of LTC Policy and Pandemic Response, released a memo providing guidance to LTC home leadership to help encourage residents to stay up to date with their COVID-19 virus protection. The memo highlighted guidance from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, specifically around the promotion of fourth doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to residents who have not yet received their booster dose. All eligible residents who have not yet received their fourth dose are highly encouraged to receive their booster by end of June 2022.

Erin's memo encouraged LTC leaders to engage residents in the following ways:

- Speak to residents and families about the benefits of the fourth dose.
 - Involve your Medical Director, Nurse Practitioner, or Pharmacist in **vaccine education sessions** directed to residents and families.
- Engage in direct one-on-one communication, as individualized discussions have been found to reduce vaccine concerns and improve vaccine uptake.
 - Ensure that vaccine information sharing is correct and true. Discourage misinformation from being circulated in your home.
- Communicate to residents and families **in advance that a vaccine day/clinic is planned.**
- Share Vaccine Information with your residents and families, **including handout below**

- Access Erin's full Memo here:
[AsDM Memo – COVID-19 Vaccine – Staying Up-to-Date \(Fourth Dose for Residents\)](#)
- Access information sheet for Residents and Families:
[Information for Residents and their Families](#)

Masking Continues in Long-Term Care

In a [news release](#) issued by the Ministry of Health, it was communicated that masks would continue to be required in long-term care and retirement homes beyond June 11th to provide an additional layer of protection from COVID-19 for residents.

According to the [Ministry of Long-Term Care's COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario](#), in the section related to masking, the removal of masks for the purposes of eating should be restricted to only areas designated by the home. Further down in the Guidance Document, on communal dining, caregivers and general visitors may accompany a resident for meals to assist them with eating (however, caregivers or general visitors must remain masked at all times and not join in the meal).

While no specified time frame has been set for when these requirements will be reassessed, we have been assured by our Ministry partners that every decision will continue to be made based on close consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) and with resident health, safety and wellbeing at the forefront. Consultations with OCMOH, Public Health Ontario as well as MLTC's Response and Recovery Advisory Committee are also ongoing as the Ministry continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keep in touch with us!

The OARC team relies on direct feedback from residents to guide our work and we are committed to representing the resident experience and your unique point of view at the many stakeholder tables and advisory groups we are part of. We acknowledge that we are still living through a pandemic, and life continues to be experienced differently by residents and teams across the province. We sincerely appreciate hearing from you and having opportunities to answer your questions. Thank you for participating in our Forums, having the courage to speak up, and using your Residents' Councils as a platform to stay informed, influence change, and shape life in your home.

Wishing you a wonderful week.

From the OARC team.