

## Memorandum

**To:** ORCA Members  
**From:** Ontario Retirement Communities Association  
**Date:** July 16, 2020  
**Re:** Summary of Changes to *Reopening Retirement Homes* Guidelines

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Today, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility released an updated [Reopening Retirement Homes guidelines document](#). A full summary of changes and their impact can be found below. Unless otherwise noted, these changes go into effect immediately.

### Requirements for Visits

#### Home Requirements

- **Discontinuation of Visits While Waiting for Test Results:** Previously, homes had to discontinue all non-essential visits while waiting for test results of symptomatic staff or residents. This requirement has been removed and visits can continue while waiting for test results. If a home enters an outbreak, all non-essential visits must be discontinued until the outbreak is resolved.
- **Information Package:** In addition to all the requirements for the information package from the previous version, homes must also include information on physical distancing in the information package for visitors.
- **Adequate Staffing:** An additional factor was added to inform decisions about visits in homes. In order to facilitate visits, the home must not have staffing shortages that would affect resident or staff safety and is not under a contingency staffing plan. There must be sufficient staff to implement the protocols related to visitors. Additionally, staffing levels are sufficient to ensure safe visiting as determined by the home's leadership. Staff are not required to supervise visits.

#### Non-Essential and Essential Visitor Requirements

The Ministry has clarified the protocols for both non-essential and essential visitor requirements.

#### Non-Essential Visitor Requirements

- **Testing Attestation:** Non-essential visitors no longer need to attest to home staff that they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the previous 2 weeks and subsequently not tested positive. This applies to all visits including outdoor, indoor and in-suite visits. Non-essential visitors must continue to be screened.
- **Indoor & Outdoor Visits:** Clarity has been provided that if a visit is occurring outdoors, visitors should use a face covering at all times. If the visit is indoors, a surgical/procedure mask is required. If a visitor does not bring their own mask, they cannot visit.

### Essential Visitor Requirements

- **Definition of Essential Visitors:** Essential visitors are defined as persons performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident.
- **Requirements:** Because the visit is “essential”, these visitors are not subject to the same requirements as non-essential visitors.
  - Essential visitors are permitted to enter a home in outbreak, provided they pass active screening every time they are on the premises of or enter the home.
  - Essential visitors are required to follow CMOH guidance when visiting, including physical distancing and the use of face coverings at all times if the visit is outdoors, in a manner aligned with Directive #3.
  - If the visit is indoors, a surgical/procedure mask is required.
  - Essential visitors are responsible for bringing their own masks. Essential visitors must only visit the designated indoor or outdoor area they are intending to visit.

### Retirement Home Tour Requirements

- **In-Person Tours:** Previously, homes were only permitted to perform virtual tours. Virtual tours must still be considered prior to or as an alternative to in-person tours. Under the new version of the guidelines document, in-person tours of the home’s facilities to prospective residents can be permitted if the home is not in outbreak. The tour group should be limited to the prospective resident or couple plus one other individual (e.g., accompanying family member or close friend).
- **Requirements:** All tour participants are subject to Non-Essential Visitor Requirements (with the exception of only visiting a designated area). The retirement home should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the tour route is restricted in a manner that minimizes potential contact with residents as much as possible.

### **Requirements for Absences**

The changes related to absences come into effect on **Friday July 17, 2020**.

- **Active Screening:** Previously, a home had to follow existing outbreak or isolation policies if a resident could not meet the conditions of screening upon return. Now, the home must only follow isolation policies.
- **Masking:** The guidance has been clarified to allow for residents to wear a face covering (as opposed to a cloth mask) while outside of the home.
- **Length of Short Absences:** The restriction on short absences being a maximum of 12 hours and not overnight has been removed. Residents are permitted to leave the retirement home for more than 12 hours or overnight. Overnight absences require

additional steps to be taken upon return.

- **Enhanced Precautions Post Overnight Absences:** A resident returning from an absence that includes an overnight stay must, upon returning to the home, follow 14-days of enhanced precautions (this does not include confinement to a resident's room). These enhanced precautions include:
  - Upon return, pass active screening;
  - Do not receive indoor visits during the 14-days;
  - Monitor for symptoms;
  - Avoid using common areas; however, if a common area cannot be avoided, the resident must use a face covering;
  - Limit contact with other residents;
  - Do not participate in group activities;
  - Wash their hands often (soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer);
  - Adhere to respiratory etiquette; and
  - Follow appropriate physical distancing guidelines.
- **Absences During Enhanced Precautions:** Residents who are following the 14-day period of enhanced precautions may leave the home for non-overnight absences. Doing so will not reset the 14-day time period. However, an overnight stay during the 14-day period will reset the 14-day time period.
- **Discontinuation of Absences:** The requirement that any non-adherence to the rules could be the basis for discontinuation of short absences has been removed.

### Requirements for New Admissions

- **New Admissions from Another Retirement Home or Long-Term Care Home:** The requirements for new admissions also apply to admissions from another retirement home or long-term care home.

### Requirements for Group Activities

- **Congregating:** Residents may congregate in small groups, if the home is not currently in a COVID-19 outbreak and if the group activities are consistent with the CMOH Directives and provincial Emergency Orders, including group size.
- **Requirements for Group Activities:** Group activities should be organized in a way to maximize resident and staff safety, including:
  - Maintaining physical distancing of at least 2 metres at all times;
  - Adherence to IPAC measures; and,
  - Masking.
- **Outside Staff/Facilitators:** Staff or program facilitators brought into the home for these services must follow all procedures for retirement home staff as outlined in CMOH Directive #3.

## Home Care and Personal Care Service Providers

- **Home Care Service Providers:** Home Care Service Providers (services provided by LHINs such as nursing care, **physiotherapy**, **occupational therapy**, social workers, etc.) are considered essential and can continue to provide care services to residents.
- **Personal Care Service Providers:** Personal Care Service Providers who provide care services to residents (e.g. hair dressing) are permitted to resume operations if doing so is consistent with the resumption of personal care services elsewhere in the province (i.e., Stage 2 re-opening).
- **Requirements for Providers:** Both Home Care and Personal Care Services Providers must follow the same requirements as retirement home staff, including:
  - The same active screening;
  - IPAC;
  - PPE;
  - Masking; and,
  - Testing requirements.

