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## VISITOR POLICY

### Effective June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

#### Purpose

All homes are required to establish and implement a visitor policy that complies with the [COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario | ontario.ca](#) (as amended from time to time) in addition to all other applicable laws to increase residents' quality of life and wellness by providing safe visiting.

Homes are reminded that residents have a right under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#), to receive visitors and homes should not develop policies that unreasonably restrict this right.

#### Guiding Principles

- **safety** – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated
- **emotional well-being** – welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation
- **equitable access** – all residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents
- **flexibility** – the physical or infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce or human resources availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to consider when setting home-specific policies
- **equality** – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers

#### Types of visitors

##### Not considered visitors

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of one are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing requirements.

## Essential visitors

Essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need related to the operations of the home or residents that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home.

There are no limits on the total number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident has failed screening, is symptomatic or in isolation.

As per [O. Reg. 246/22](#) under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#), there are four types of essential visitors:

- **a caregiver**, as defined under section 4 of [O. Reg. 246/22](#). A caregiver is a type of essential visitor who is visiting the home to provide direct care to meet the essential needs of a particular resident. Caregivers must be at least 16 years of age and must be designated by the resident or his or her substitute decision-maker. Direct care includes providing support or assistance to a resident that includes providing direct physical support (for example, eating, bathing and dressing) or providing social and emotional support.
  - examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following:
    - supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing and eating assistance
    - providing cognitive stimulation
    - fostering successful communication
    - providing meaningful connection and emotional support
    - offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making
  - examples of caregivers include:
    - friends and family members who provide meaningful connection
    - a privately hired caregiver
    - paid companions
    - translator

An important role of the caregiver is that of providing meaningful connection and emotional support. A person should not be excluded from being designated as a caregiver if they are unable to provide direct physical support.

- **a support worker** who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents. Essential services provided by support workers include but are not limited to:
  - assessment, diagnostic, intervention or rehabilitation and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
  - Assistive Devices Program vendors – for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
  - moving a resident in or out of a home
  - social work services
  - legal services

- post-mortem services
  - emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
  - maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home's HVAC mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance
  - food or nutrition and water or drink delivery
  - Canada Post mail services and other courier services
  - election officials or workers
- **a person visiting a very ill resident** for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care
  - **a government inspector** with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties

### Designating a caregiver

- Caregivers must be designated and must be at least 16 years of age unless approval is obtained from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.
- A maximum of four caregivers may be designated per resident at a time. (Note: caregivers who were designated prior to December 15, 2021, may continue to be designated as a caregiver even if this means the resident has more than four designated caregivers).
- A resident or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:
  - resident's care needs that is reflected in the plan of care
  - availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.
- A resident or their substitute decision-maker may not continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the home.

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is **the responsibility of the resident or their substitute decision-maker** and not the home. The designation of a caregiver should be made in writing to the home. Homes should have a procedure for documenting caregiver designations.

### Caregivers – scheduling and length and frequency of visits

Homes may not require scheduling or restrict the length or frequency of visits by caregivers. However, in the case where a resident resides in an area of the home in outbreak, is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one caregiver may visit at a time.

Recognizing there are caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident, in the event of an outbreak, caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19/covid 19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.

## **General visitors**

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

Homes should prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of residents and strive to be as accommodating as possible when scheduling visits with general visitors.

## **Access to homes**

All general visitors, including children under the age of five, can enter the long-term care home. General visitors, with the exception of the children under the age of five, will need to follow the vaccination policy of the individual long-term care home.

## **Up to four visitors (including caregivers) per resident may visit at a time for indoor visits.**

There are no sector limits on the number of visitors permitted at outdoor visits, and homes can return to their regular practices on use of their available outdoor spaces in accordance with applicable guidance and laws.

Homes should not restrict individuals from outdoor visits based on vaccination status and should ensure physical distancing (a minimum of two metres or six feet) is maintained between groups.

## **Restrictions during outbreaks or when a resident is isolating**

### **Essential visitors**

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating or resides in a home or area of the home in an outbreak.

### **General visitors**

General visitors are not permitted:

- when a home or area of a home is in outbreak
- to visit an isolating resident
- when the local public health unit so directs

## **Direction from the local public health unit**

In the case where a local public health unit directs a home in respect of the number of visitors allowed, the home is to follow the direction of the local public health unit.

## Records

Visitor logs or records must be kept for a period of at least 30 days and be readily available to the local public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request.

The visitor log must include, at minimum:

- the name and contact information of the visitor
- time and date of the visit
- the purpose of the visit (for example, name of resident visited)

## Non-compliance

If a visitor is found to be non-compliant with the visiting policy, the following will occur:

**Step 1:** Interview with visitor to provide strategies for supporting visitor, understanding and adherence – if compliance does not improve, move to step 2

**Step 2:** Reinstruction

**Step 3:** Ending the visit; the Foyer will document all cases where a visit has been ended by the Foyer

### Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor

- A visitor may be prohibited from visiting by the Administrator if the visitor repeatedly and flagrantly is in non-compliance with the Visitor's Policy
- Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor may occur when:
  - Non-adherence cannot be resolved by explaining and demonstrating requirements
  - The health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors is negatively impacted
  - Behaviour has been demonstrated continuously over multiple visits
  - The visitor has had previous visit(s) ended by the Foyer

Prohibiting a Visitor will be decided if:

- All other reasonable efforts to maintain safety have been exhausted
- A reasonable length of prohibition is stipulated
- Clear identification of requirements the visitor must meet before the visits may be resumed

Any temporary Prohibition of a Visitor must be clearly documented

The resident or substitute decision maker may designate in writing an alternative individual as caregiver to help meet the resident's care needs when a visitor is prohibited from visiting

## Screening and surveillance testing

All visitors must be screened for symptoms and exposure. Screening for symptoms includes a temperature check and screening for signs and symptom as identified in the current [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms \(gov.on.ca\)](#).

All visitors and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested in accordance with the Minister's Directive. Refer directly to the [Minister of Long-Term Care's Directive COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes](#) for requirements related to surveillance testing.

## **Education**

Foyer des Pionniers is committed to provide education or training to all visitors about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

Visitors can visit the following guidance from [Public Health Ontario resources](#) to support IPAC and PPE education and training:

- guidance document: [recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment](#)
- video: [putting on full personal protective equipment](#)
- video: [taking off full personal protective equipment](#)
- videos: [how to hand wash](#) and [how to hand rub](#)