

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Visitors (COVID-19) (ON)</b>	<b>POLICY #:</b>	<b>XXII-N-10.60</b>
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**POLICY:**

To ensure a safe environment that follows provincially mandated protocols regarding physical distancing, this policy and procedure provides guidance for how visiting can be scheduled and facilitated across the organization’s retirement residences in accordance with Directive #3 issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH).

**Note:** Visitor protocols may change across regional jurisdictions as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s direction and will supersede this policy requirement.

The role that families, friends, and visitors play in providing caregiving and emotional supports is important to the quality of life for residents.

Retirement team members, volunteers, physicians, and placement students are not considered visitors, as their access is determined by the retirement residence.

**Visitor Vaccination Requirements to visit the residence:**

- All General Visitors must be fully vaccinated in alignment with the provincial definition.
- Essential Visitors/Designated Caregivers are permitted to enter the residence regardless of vaccination status but must adhere to IPAC guidelines.
  - Provided that they pass active screening, testing, and PPE requirements, must not be denied access to residents (e.g. vaccination status should not impact access).
  - In order to limit the spread of infection, a resident and/or their substitute decision maker should only be encouraged to change the designation of their Essential Caregiver in limited circumstances, including in response to:
    - A change in the resident’s care needs that is reflected in the plan of care;
    - A change in the availability of a designated Essential Caregiver, either temporary (e.g. illness) or permanent; and/or
    - Due to the vaccination status of the designated Essential Caregiver.

**PROCEDURE:**

The General Manager or designate will:

- 1) Monitor and follow provincial directives related to Visitor Protocols.
- 2) Notify their VPRO and RWP if they are contacted by RHRA.
- 3) Establish designated outdoor/indoor area(s) for visits to occur, while respecting the requirement of physical distancing.
- 4) Establish the flow of team member, resident, and family movement to and from visiting area(s), ensuring minimal traffic through the location/resident suite areas.
- 5) Ensure there is an outdoor/indoor space designated to greet and screen visitors prior to the visit.

The outdoor space will:

- Provide for 6 feet/2 metres physical distancing between individuals;
- Ensure privacy for the resident and family; and
- Utilize physical barrier(s) such as planter boxes, half wall, table, etc. to support facilitation of physical distancing requirements.

The indoor space will:

- Have an active screening location and process;
  - Be a designated location in the residence, preferably a space close to main entrance/resident home area i.e. lounge area, multipurpose room, empty resident suite. Location for designated for indoor visits to be clearly identified with signage; if required.
  - Determine if a resident suite is appropriate for an indoor visit. Take into account the activities to be performed during the visits, if the resident is sharing a room, and whether isolation precautions are in place;
  - Provide for 2m/6 feet physical distancing between individuals;
  - Ensure privacy for the resident and family; and
  - Use physical barriers such as furniture spaced to meet physical distancing requirement.
- 6) Communicate with residents and families the process for indoor/outdoor visits, prioritizing emotional and/or clinical decline of residents.

The Retirement Leadership Team will:

- 1) Develop a process of scheduling family/visitor visits.
- 2) Document essential visitors who are designated as caregivers in the resident's electronic health record. This can be done by identifying the caregiver in the resident's profile section of the chart (contacts) if applicable, as well in the resident's service plan in each task for which the caregiver is providing support. Keeping track of who is the designated caregiver is important, especially as the designated caregiver may change as the resident's service needs change.
  - Also document designated caregivers on the Designated Caregiver Tracking Form and provide to Active Screener so they may validate who is permitted for this type of visit.
  - Inform the resident/SDM that the retirement residence needs to be notified of any changes in who is assigned as the designated caregiver(s)
- 3) Ensure visitors are educated about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
- 4) Ensure caregivers have attested prior to visiting any resident for the first time and at least once every month thereafter that they have read and reread the following documents:
  - The Visitor policy
  - Public Health Ontario's document entitled Public Health Ontario's Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Watched/Re-watched the following Public Health Ontario videos:
    - i. Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment;
    - ii. Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment; and
    - iii. How to Hand Wash.

- 5) Appoint team member(s) to conduct active screening and provide education to all visitors.
- 6) Ensure the visiting area is cleaned between visits, including cleaning and disinfection of all chairs, rails, and other surfaces.
- 7) Ensure the visit is documented in the resident's electronic health record.
- 8) Maintain all records related to the family visiting process, including all changes to designated caregiver(s).
- 9) Cancel and reschedule the visit for any of the following reasons:
  - The retirement residence goes into outbreak
  - Resident is experiencing symptoms or is self-isolating
  - Inclement weather (i.e. heat wave or rain)
  - Operational needs require team members to support resident care
  - Other emergencies (i.e. Code Red)
  - As directed by Public Health during an outbreak

The Active Screener will:

- 1) Ensure all visitors who are required, complete the required Safety Reviews. General visitors review IPAC on entry to the residence.
- 2) Have every visitor read and acknowledge the Visitor Acknowledgement Posting and ensure each essential visitor has signed the Visitor Acknowledgment Form portion of the Designated Essential Caregiver Attestation Form and file in binder for contact tracing at least once per month.
- 3) Be aware of Visitor definition Protocols that will reflect screening or testing changes (see XXII-N-10.60(a) Visitor Definitions & Protocols).
- 4) Ensure visitor is wearing appropriate PPE based on at minimum provincial standards. This is inclusive of a surgical mask and eye protection. PPE is required at times. Eye protection is not required if fully vaccinated except when providing care to a suspect or confirmed COVID-19 resident.
- 5) Ensure visitor completes hand hygiene at screening station and prior to entering the residence.
- 6) Ensure visitor shows identification with name and date of birth along with paper or electronic evidence of proof of vaccination. Acceptable proof of vaccination is an enhanced vaccine certificate with a quick response (QR code). Photo identification is not required.
  - Examples of identification that may be used include:
    - Birth certificate
    - Driver's license
    - Government (Ontario or other) issued identification card
    - Passport
    - Citizenship card
    - Permanent resident (PR) card
    - Indian Status Card or Indigenous Membership Card
- 7) Ensure fully vaccinated visitors may be permitted if they pass active screening requirements upon entry to the residence, including demonstrating a negative antigen POCT result.
- 8) **Note: In outbreak** – Inform the visitor/essential caregiver on arrival that they are to go directly to the resident's suite, with no stops to speak with residents or team members.

- 9) Remind essential caregiver to complete hand hygiene/sanitizing upon leaving the suite and prior to exiting the property. **In Outbreak:** Essential Caregivers/visitors are to then leave the building directly.

**Notes:**

- **No General visitors are permitted during outbreak.**
- An individual who has previously had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 PCR test or rapid antigen test AND was cleared should generally not be re-tested for 30 days unless they are symptomatic.
- Previously positive individuals should provide proof of clearance from Public Health prior to resuming visits.
- Residents who are not self-isolating may receive Essential Visitors, General Visitors, and Personal Care Service Providers if they are not living in the outbreak area of a residence.
- Residents who are self-isolating under Contact and Droplet Precautions may only receive Essential Visitors.

All Team Members will:

- 1) Participate in and support visiting of residents as needed.
- 2) Guide any visitor with PPE utilization as needed.
- 3) Seek support from nurse in charge and/or leadership team(s) to address questions and concerns, including immediate advice to support individual resident and family needs.

The Visitor will:

- 1) Contact the residence during scheduled times to arrange a date and time to visit.
- 2) If the visitor is a designated essential visitor/caregiver, or personal caregiver, attest to the requirements listed above regarding training. The designated essential caregiver along with the applicable resident must sign the Designated Essential Caregiver Attestation Form.
- 3) Contact the residence with the name(s) of designated essential caregivers; the designation must be made in writing.
- 4) Be required to participate in surveillance testing and provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test via Rapid Antigen Test and/or PCR Test based on CMOH requirements in Directive #3, regardless of vaccination status.
- 5) Participate in the active screening process, perform hand hygiene, don/doff PPE, and abide by any other Infection Prevention & Control protocols in place during the visit.
- 6) Refrain from bringing any pets to the retirement residence *unless clearance is obtained from General Manager.*
- 7) Refrain from bringing gifts, foods, or beverages to the visit.
- 8) Practice physical distancing, universal masking, and wear eye protection while visiting with the resident.
- 9) If visiting indoors, surgical/medical masks are required. If visiting outdoors, cloth masks are acceptable but not preferred.

**NOTE:** Any non-compliance with the visitor responsibilities in this policy will result in discontinuation of the visit for the non-compliant visitor

**References:**

- CMOH Directive #3 available at:  
[https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH\\_HPPA.pdf](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf)
- MOH COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance Update available at:  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_testing\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_guidance.pdf)
- Retirement Homes policy to Implement Directive 3 available at: [\\*RH-Policy-to-Implement-D3-Dec-20-2021-FINAL1.pdf](#) (rhra.ca)
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>

- Attachments:** XXII-N-10.60(a) Visitor Definitions & Requirements (ON)  
XXII-N-10.60(b) Designated Caregiver Attestation Form (ON)  
XXII-N-10.60(c) Visitor Acknowledgement Posting (ON)  
XXII-N-10.60(d) Visitor Acknowledgement Form (ON)