

t: (519) 759-4666
f: (519) 759-0200
389 West Street
Brantford, ON N3R 3V9
siennialiving.ca



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Dear Families and Friends,

We wanted to share information around the new Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care direction on resident absences and visitors in long-term care homes. We are pleased to be able to welcome essential caregivers and general visitors back to the home and to see residents be able to spend time away from the care community with loved ones.

While we are pleased that there is more flexibility for you to interact with your loved ones, we recognize that increased mobility heightens the potential for the spread of COVID-19 within our care communities. And as always, our main priority is always the health and safety of our residents and team members.

With this in mind, we ask that family and friends work with us to protect your loved ones and care community as a whole by adhering to all infection prevention measures while inside and outside of the home. This includes following all public health measures, including physical distancing, handwashing and adhering to group sizes according to your community.

Following is an outline of the new guidelines that have been announced. Every resident, community and region are unique so we do encourage you to work with your care community team directly to arrange visits or outings accordingly. And although visits may not have to be scheduled, we kindly ask for you to let our teams know when you may visit so they can support everyone's needs to the best of their abilities.

Resident Leaves

The province has provided guidance on two types of resident absences from the home – short stay and temporary absences. Here are the new guidelines:

Short Stay Absences	Temporary Absences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For health care-related, social, or other reasons• Does not include an overnight stay (except single-night emergency room visits)• Outpatient medical visits are considered a short-stay absence• Emergency room visits that take place over a single night should be considered equivalent to an outpatient medical visit. If the resident is admitted to the hospital at any point, or the emergency room visit takes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For personal reasons• For one or more nights• Homes must review and approve all temporary absences based on a case-by-case risk assessment considering, but not limited to, the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The home's ability to support self-isolation for 14 days upon the resident's return○ Local disease transmission and activity

<p>place over two or more nights, homes will follow provincial guidelines to re-admit the resident to the home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents must be provided with a medical mask to be worn at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk associated with the planned activities that will be undertaken by the resident while out of the home The resident's ability to comply with local and provincial policies/bylaws If the home denies a temporary absence request, the home must communicate this to the resident/substitute decision maker in writing, including the rationale for this decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon return to the home, residents must be actively screened, but are not required to be tested or self-isolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon return to the home the resident will be required to self-isolate for 14 days

New Definitions for Visitors to Long-Term Care Homes

Here are the new definitions on long-term care home visits – all visitors will continue to be actively screened on entry into the home:

Essential Visitors	General Visitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An essential visitor is a person performing essential support services (e.g. food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services (e.g. phlebotomy) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident Essential visitors include support workers and caregivers. However, an essential visitor does not need to be a support worker or caregiver, as long as they meet the provincial definition Essential visitors are able to enter the home during an outbreak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision maker; and/or For social reasons (e.g. family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care, including care-related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity General visitors are not permitted to visit the home during an outbreak Visits can happen inside or outside the home. To ensure coordination, we prefer that visits are scheduled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A support worker is a type of essential visitor who is there to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home Examples of support workers include:, maintenance workers or a person delivering food, provided they are not home staff as defined in the LTCHA 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A caregiver is a type of essential visitor who is: 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker; and ○ Visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). ● Examples of caregivers include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators. 	
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We have no doubt that these changes will have a positive impact on residents' mental health and well-being, as well as family and friends. We remain committed to protecting the health and safety of all residents above all else. With this in mind, we ask everyone to work together to help us protect our communities by adhering to all infection prevention measures while inside and outside of the home.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and your patience as our teams work to implement these important changes.

Following are helpful links with details and guidelines to support safe outings and visits.

- [Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Video: Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- [Video: Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- [Video: How to Hand Wash](#)