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Section: INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL	Page No.: 1 of 12
Subject: Visitors	Approved By: Assistant Director of Care Manager, IPAC
Supersede date: April 1, 2023	Review Date: August 10, 2023

**STANDARD:**

Visitors are welcome in the Home. The visitor policy respects the Residents' Bill of Rights and ensures that essential visitors, including caregivers, have access to the Home even during an outbreak or a pandemic. However, during an outbreak or pandemic, the Home must follow all imposed applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations set out by the Chief Medical Officer or Health or the medical officer of health appointed under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and applicable laws and direction from our local Public health Unit

There are processes to ensure safety, emotional well-being, equitable access, and flexibility during Indoor Visits throughout an outbreak and pandemic. The Home is responsible for supporting residents in receiving visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19 or any other contagious illness.

The Home realizes the role that families, friends and visitors play in providing caregiving and emotional support that adds to the quality of life of our residents. The indoor visits are guided by the outlined principles from the Ministry of Long-Term Care, which are as follows:

**Safety:** Any approach to visiting an LTC home must consider, balance, and meet the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors to mitigate risks.

**Emotional Well-being:** Welcoming visitors is intended to support residents' mental and emotional well-being by reducing any potential negative impacts of social isolation.

**Equitable Access:** All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with the resident preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.



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**Flexibility:** The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce/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:** All residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

Shepherd Village encourages visitors to consider their health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting the Home is appropriate.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Types of Visitors:**

**1. 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.

There are four types of essential visitors:

- **People visiting very ill or palliative residents** who are receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- **Government inspectors with a statutory right of entry.** Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the Fixing of Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTC), the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- **Support workers:** support workers are persons who visit the home



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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:

- o assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
- o Assistive Devices Program vendors -- for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
- o moving a resident in or out of a home
- o social work services
- o legal services
- o post-mortem services o emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
- o 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.
- o food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
- o Canada Post mail services and other courier services
- o election officials/workers

**Caregivers:** A caregiver is a type of essential visitor designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, which provides one or more forms of support or assistance, including direct physical support or offers social, spiritual, or emotional support, whether paid or unpaid. This can include family members, friends, or a person of importance to the resident.

Examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following:

- o supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating assistance
- o providing cognitive stimulation
- o fostering successful communication



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- o providing meaningful connection and emotional support ■  
Offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making
- Examples of caregivers include:
- o friends and family members who provide a meaningful connection.
  - o a privately hired caregiver.
  - o paid or unpaid companions
  - o translator

**Note:** The Home is responsible for documenting and keeping a written record of

- o the designation of a caregiver; and
- o the approval from a parent or legal guardian to permit persons under 16 years of age to be designated as a caregiver.

**General Visitor** to provide nonessential 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.

All the above will be referred to as visitors.

Note: The Home's staff, volunteers, and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the Home is determined by the Director of Client Services and/ or Director of Care.

**PROCEDURE:**

**1. Access to Homes and Outbreak Areas**

- **Shepherd Lodge Strongly recommends that ALL visitors have up to date Covid 19 vaccination and follow public health**



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- measures (i.e. screening, and hand hygiene ) for the duration of their visit to the Home.
- Due to room capacity, four visitors are permitted at a time.
  - During an outbreak or suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local Public Health Unit will provide direction on visitors to the Home, depending on the specific situation.
  - Visiting hours are from 10:30 AM to 7:30 PM

## 2. Screening

All staff, students, volunteers, support workers, caregivers and visitors must undergo passive screening for Covid-19 before entry.

**Passive screening** means that those entering the setting review screening questions themselves, and there is no verification of screening (for example, signage at entrances as a visual reminder not to enter if symptomatic). Please refer Screening Policy

### Visitors:

Before visiting any resident for the first time, the visitor must read the Home's visitor policy located on the Shepherd Village website.

The website also has training on how to safely provide direct care, including donning and doffing required PPE, and hand hygiene. Public Health Ontario resources that can be used to facilitate training.

- Guidance document entitled Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Video entitled Putting on Full PPE
- Video entitled Taking off Full PPE; and
- Video entitled How to Hand Wash.

The visitors by signing the **visiting Logbook** attest that they have read/re-read the Home's visitor policy.



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## **2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Home will provide surgical/procedure masks, gloves, gowns, and eye protection (i.e. face shields or goggles) for essential visitors as needed. Gowns, gloves and eye protection must be worn when the resident is isolating and based on Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)

## **3. Responding to all Types of Visitor Non-adherence**

The Home fully recognizes how critical visits are to the resident's care needs and emotional well-being, and therefore the Home will ensure to support all visitors in understanding the importance of adhering to the home's visitor policy. Every non-adherence to the requirements will be reviewed and dealt with based on the severity of the non-adherence.

### **3.1 Ending a Visit**

Each time a non-adherence occurs, reminders and training of the requirements will be provided to the visitor. The Home will end a visit if the visitor repeatedly fails to adhere to the Home's policy, provided:

- That the visitor received explanations of all applicable requirements
- The visitor was equipped with all the resources to adhere to the requirements (i.e., there is sufficient space to physically distance, PPE supplied and demonstrated how to correctly don and doff; and
- That the visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirements.

The Director of Care or delegate will document any termination of visits due to non-adherence in the electronic health record of the resident.



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### **3.2 Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor**

The Home will temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and serious non-adherence with the Home’s visitor policy.

Before prohibiting a visitor, the Home will consider the non-adherence.

- Can be resolved successfully by explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements.
- Whether the visitor has been given sufficient time and information to comply with the Home’s visitor policy
- The nature, severity, and frequency of non-compliance (continuously non-adhering over multiple visits)
- The potential impact of discontinuing visits on the resident’s clinical and emotional well-being
- Is within the legislative requirements.
- Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors in the Home.
- Is by a visitor whose previous visits have been ended by the Home.

Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor should:

- Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted.
- Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition depending on the severity.
- Be clearly communicate to the visitor what requirements will need to be met before visits may be resumed (i.e. reviewing the visitor policy, Public Health Guidelines, etc.); and
- Be documented by the Director of Care or delegate.
- Residents’ and Family Council should be consulted on procedures for addressing non-adherence by visitors.

Where the Home has temporarily prohibited a caregiver, the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may designate an alternate



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individual as a caregiver to help meet the resident's care needs.

#### **4. Home Requirements for Visits**

The following baseline requirements must be in place before visits can be accepted for visits:

- a) The procedures for the resumption of safe indoor visits for **Visitors** will be communicated well with residents, families, visitors, and staff, including the Infection Prevention and Control Manager and the Health and Safety Committee. The educational information that needs to be shared are as follows:
  - Respiratory etiquette
  - Donning and doffing and proper use of masks and any other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Proper hand hygiene and any other applicable IPAC practices
  - Approach to dealing with in-adherence to home policies and procedures, including the discontinuation of visits.
  - Videos are available on the Shepherd Village Website
- b) The Home always follows the highest Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards prior to, during and after visits.
- c) Visitors must be symptoms free when they visit, if unvaccinated we ask that you perform a Rapid test, self-testing is located behind the fish tank at the main reception area.
- d) All visitors must sign the logbook prior to proceeding to the home areas.
- e) The Home is providing meaningful and equitable access to visits for all residents; and considers the staffing and space capacity available to the Home to maintain the safety of residents, staff, and visitors.





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- f) The Home will have the discretion in scheduling and is considering the directives in place at the time.
- g) The Home has created and will maintain a list of visitors. The list will be available for relevant staff members to access as needed.

## 5. Visitor Requirements

Prior to each visitor, the visitor must:

- a) On each visit, undergo passive screening using appropriate signage and sign in at the front reception.
- b) Comply with the Home's IPAC protocols, including proper use of surgical/procedural masks and hand sanitizer at the beginning and end of the visit.
- c) The Home will provide surgical/procedural masks to visitors and residents (as needed).
- d) The Home strongly recommends Only visiting the resident the visitor (s) intending to visit.
- e) Visitors must see the Unit Nurse before arrival to ensure the loved one is not on Isolation Precautions. You may be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). General visitors are not permitted: when a home or area of a home is in an outbreak, visiting an isolating resident, and when the local public health unit so directs.
- f) Unreasonable non-adherence to these requirements and rules may be the basis for discontinuation of visits.



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**OUTCOME:**

1. Indoor visits will occur in a safe and equitable manner.
2. Visitors will remain to have access to the Home unless advised by PHU.
3. The visitation approach considers balance and meets the Health and Safety, and emotional needs of residents, staff, and visitors.
4. The visitor policy is well communicated and is provided to the Resident's Council and Family Council and is posted in the Home and on the Home's website and included in the resident information package upon admission.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

1. FLTCH Act
2. Ministry of Long-Term Care & Ontario Health: Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care Homes, August, 2022
3. OLTCA: Best Practice Exchange Forum, June 2020
4. Ministry of Long-Term Care & Ontario Health: Update to Visits at Long-Term Care Homes, July 16, 2021
5. Directive # 3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, July 16, 2021
6. Forms Manual, COVID - Essential Caregiver Request Form
7. Forms Manual, COVID - Family Information Package
8. COVID-19 Visiting Policy, effective, July 16, 2020



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9. Guidance document entitled Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
10. Video entitled Putting on full PPE and one-piece PPE
11. Video entitled How to Hand Wash
12. COVID-19 Visiting Policy, MLTC, July 16, 2020
13. The COVID-19 Response Framework: *Keeping Ontario Safe and Open*, November 13, 2020
14. ADM Letter, Updated Long-Term Care Sector Surveillance Testing Strategies, July 16, 2021
15. Ministry of Long-Term Care Memorandum: New Inspector Testing Protocol, December 8, 2020
16. Ministry of Long-Term Care Associate DM Memo: Enhancing the Protection for LTC Homes, February 4, 2021.
17. Rapid Antigen Testing, frequently asked Questions, July 16, 2021.
18. Updated FAQs: Directive #3, MLTC Guidance and Visiting Policy
19. Ministry of Long Term Care: Requirements and Guidance for LTC Homes memo
20. COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario, December 28, 2021
21. Long-Term Care Visitors, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot As of December 30th, 2021
22. Assoc DM memo LTC Pandemic Response update 2022-02-07



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23. MLTC: LTC Pandemic Response Update: March 9, 2022.
24. Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, Ontario Regulations 246/22
25. [COVID-19 COVID 19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario,](#)

