



NOTICE TO FAMILIES OF LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS

December 15, 2021

Over the past 20 months we have learned that the COVID-19 virus is anything but predictable. Just a few days ago, we had hoped and expected that our residents would be enjoying fewer restrictions this Christmas and be spending more time with family over the holidays.

Regrettably, due to the alarming rate at which the highly contagious Omicron variant is spreading, this is no longer possible. The Ministry of Long-Term Care has issued new directives that require us to put responsive measures in place that will provide optimal safety and support to residents, while balancing the mental and emotional well-being of residents and their families, as well as safeguard the staff who are critical to the care of residents.

Attached is a summary of the measures that must be put in place at all Ontario long-term care homes. **Changes to general visitation will be implemented today, December 15th at 7 p.m.**

Even for individuals who are fully vaccinated, the risk of asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 remains a possibility. As a further measure of protection, the Ministry of Long-term Care strongly urges residents, caregivers and staff to get a third / booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Emerging evidence suggests that three doses of vaccine are significantly more effective against the Omicron variant than two doses. The majority of SJLC residents have received the booster. A small percentage of residents will receive the booster as soon as they have met the "six months since 2nd dose" qualification. Public health has given high priority status to caregivers who meet the "six months since 2nd dose" qualification. Essential caregivers may pick up a qualification document from our front desk. Please contact Katrina Marques at 519-751-7096, Ext 3217 if you have questions about the booster shot.

Every one of us has a crucial role to play in reducing the number of COVID-19 cases. We encourage you to continue to follow all Public Health guidelines at all times, including limiting the number of people with whom you are in close contact, especially if you will be visiting and helping to care for the vulnerable senior population. Your understanding and support are greatly appreciated at this critical time.

Sincerely,

David Wormald

President

Requirements and Guidance for Long-Term Care Homes

Effective December 17 (except where otherwise specified)

The requirements below are for Long-Term Care Homes that are not in an outbreak. For requirements for homes in an outbreak, please refer to COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures document. *Additional protocols at the discretion of the individual long-term care home are shown in red.*

Area	Summary Requirements
Surveillance Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test all fully vaccinated staff, students, volunteers, and caregivers, at minimum, 2 times per week, in addition to existing testing requirements for those not fully vaccinated. • General visitors / support workers, regardless of vaccination status, require proof of negative test upon entry, taken the day of the visit, or on a previous day. Testing is also required for outdoor visits. • Testing not required for infants under one year of age. • Individuals who show proof of a confirmed COVID-19 infection in the past 30 days should not be re-tested except with the onset of symptoms or if they've travelled outside of Canada in the 14 days prior to entering a home*.
Vaccinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective December 15 at 7 p.m.: Restrict general visitors who are not fully vaccinated from entering the long-term care home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdoor visits still permitted (where feasible) for unvaccinated individuals. • Effective December 20: To gain entry to the home, caregivers must show proof of their first dose as of December 20th and by February 21, 2022 to show proof of all required doses. **Caregivers designated after December 14th are required to be fully vaccinated to gain entry to the home. <p style="color: red; margin-top: 10px;"><i>If you choose not to disclose your vaccination status, you will be considered unvaccinated and will not be able to enter the organization to visit with your loved one.</i></p>
Visitors (general visitors and caregivers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outdoor</i> visits (where feasible): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to four people per resident at a time (includes caregivers). • <i>Indoor</i> visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to two people per resident at a time (includes caregivers). • Residents can designate a maximum of two caregivers (unless more than two caregivers were already designated prior to December 14th).
Activities (communal dining, social activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohorting of residents for high-risk activities (singing, dancing etc.) and dining. • Large group social activities are discouraged. • Family members will not be permitted entry into the dining room until further notice • Performances/entertainers permitted in adherence to visitor requirements regarding testing and vaccination.

<p>Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase frequency of audits to every two weeks to ensure adequate supply and preparation. • Homes are reminded of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infection Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Homes: Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices ○ COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Checklist for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes
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Area	Summary Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems in Buildings and COVID-19 • Reinforce staff cohorting, including during breaks, and use virtual staff meetings where possible.

<p>Absences/ Admissions/ Transfers</p>	<p>Day absences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day absences for social purposes are permitted for fully vaccinated residents only. <p>Overnight absences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight absences for social purposes are being suspended, regardless of vaccination status. Residents who wish to leave the home overnight for social purposes will need to follow the appropriate discharge process, as required in section 147.1 of O.Reg.79/10 (General) under the <i>Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007</i> as well as the re-admission protocol when they return at a later date. Essential, medical and compassionate and palliative absences are still permitted, regardless of vaccination status. <p>Requirements upon return/admission/transfer to home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day absences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively screen residents upon return; Rapid test <u>and</u> PCR test on day 3 following absence, followed by a PCR test on day 7. No isolation is required unless positive result is received. If known exposure to a case, PCR test on day 1 and day 7 and isolate until a negative result is confirmed from day 7. For all return/admissions/transfers from another healthcare facility that is not in an outbreak: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If asymptomatic and fully vaccinated and no known exposure to a case, do PCR test prior to admission or on arrival at the LTCH, with isolation until a negative test result is received. Do enhanced symptom screening on admission and twice daily for 10 days following the return/admission/transfer. For all other return/admissions/transfers to the home (not including day absences): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PCR test is required prior to admission or on day 1, and on day 7. Isolation is required until a negative result is confirmed from day 7 (the test prior to admission is only valid the day of, or from the previous day). Do enhanced symptom screening on admission and twice daily for 10 days following the return/admission/transfer.
<p>Screening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes are reminded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All individuals must be screened prior to entry into the home. Once daily symptom screening is required for residents in the home unless requirements related to return/admissions/transfers apply.

Area	Summary Requirements
<p>Preparedness Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes should review and update their fall preparedness planning checklists (or other documents) to ensure current.

<p>Additional protocols for SJLC: Pets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets will not be permitted in the home until further notice
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* Testing can also be considered if there is exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, if there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the home, or at the direction of the local public health unit.

**Exception for those visiting residents receiving end of life care and those with valid proof of medical exemption – they are to be restricted to the residents’ rooms. Infants under the age of 1 are also permitted.

Source Documents: [Directive #3](#), [Directive #5 COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario](#) [The Minister’s Directive on Long-Term Care COVID-19 Immunization Policy](#) [Minister of Long-Term Care’s Directive COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes](#)