



To: St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre Families and Residents

Date: Thursday, October 8th, 2020

Re: Important COVID-19 Visitor and Absence update

The St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre team would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during this time of uncertainty and when daily COVID-19 related information requires us to continuously evaluate our approach to COVID-19 spread prevention.

St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre Brantford is pleased to report that there are currently no reported cases of COVID-19 in our resident or staff population.

Thanksgiving and Absences

Thanksgiving is a time where families gather. Unfortunately, the second wave of COVID-19 is now upon us. To support spread prevention, many families have decided to follow the advice of the government and scale down celebrations to include only those who reside within the same household.

Short Stay/Temporary Absences

We know that many residents and families will want to spend time together over the holiday weekend. We want to ensure that all visits and absences occur in a manner that includes COVID-19 spread prevention best practices. To support this, hand hygiene, physical distancing, and mask education will continue to be provided for all visitors. In addition to this, we are offering the following factual information for your consideration:

- COVID-19 spreads when more than one household is gathered together. Our residents are not members of an off-site household.
- The number of Ontario Long-Term Care Homes in COVID-19 outbreak has tripled in less than two weeks.
- We know that spread is happening in both residential and commercial congregate settings.
- It is possible for someone to pass along the COVID-19 virus to another person while you are feeling well.
- Community precautions have failed to prevent the second wave.
- Test result delays mean that we may not know the full extent of Wave 2 on any given day.
- COVID-19 Wave 1 was a devastating tragedy.
- Short stay and temporary absences represent a higher risk than alternative approaches to visitation.

Our Advice

Under normal circumstances an absence to share Thanksgiving is a wonderful time for all involved. Today this absence can put all St. Joseph's Lifecare residents at risk. Our advice is to avoid taking a resident off the St. Joseph's Lifecare campus in favour of enjoying a visit in our gardens or an indoor visit for those who meet indoor visit requirements.

Family members may not realize that they could be the source of infection for their loved one; sadly, that unfortunate possibility is very real now. Isolating seniors returning from a short-stay absence is the only way to keep residents and families safe. We understand that this change of practice is difficult for residents and families and we have not made this decision lightly. The health and well-being of our residents and employees must remain our first priority.

To protect all residents, the following short stay absence procedure will be in effect beginning Saturday, Oct. 10th:

- All residents leaving the SJLCB property boundary for a short stay or temporary absence will be required to isolate for a 14-day period immediately following their return.
- Prior to exiting the home, the family member escorting the resident will be asked to sign an attestation form indicating:
 1. Their intention to visit within or outside of the St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre boundary
 2. That they have received information related to COVID-19 spread prevention best practices.
 3. Acknowledgement of the requirement for residents to isolate for 14 days if they have visited outside of the St. Joseph's lifecare Centre boundary

Please visit. Essential caregivers, please continue your wonderful work – we learned important lessons during Wave 1 about the needs of residents and we are committed to maintaining indoor visiting and essential caregiver access. More information about visiting can be found below and on our website.

Visiting Updates & Reminders

- At this time, ***outdoor visits have ended***. The unpredictability of the weather makes it difficult to continue this practice safely. We are thankful that our warmer days continued until the end of September allowing us to offer this type of visit for an extended period of time.
- ***Window visits have also concluded***. We do not want to encourage group gatherings on the property due to the significant increases in provincial COVID-19 cases. The safety of our residents, staff, visitors and families are at the forefront of all decisions and it is important that we decrease the number of individuals congregating in groups to help decrease the risk of exposure.
- **General Indoor Visits** will continue. Please reach out to the Recreation Therapy team to book these appointments and/or request information regarding visitor requirements for these visits
- We welcome visitors for **compassionate** reasons when a resident is receiving **active end of life** care. These visits will be initiated by a member of our clinical team.
- Each Resident may have **TWO essential caregivers** designated to provide care. All essential caregivers must be registered as essential caregivers. This designation requires an application and approval by a member of the clinical leadership team.

For any questions – please reach out to reception at 519-751-7096 who will forward your message to a member of the leadership team.

Thank you for your continued support

