

April 23, 2021

MEMO TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees

FROM: Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister

SUBJECT: Supporting Long-Term Care Home (LTC) Placements

On April 11, 2021, the ministry together with Ontario Health asked you, our home partners, to do everything you can to admit or readmit as many LTC home applicants from hospitals as is safe and appropriate. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated. As of April 19th, 333 individuals designated as alternative level of care (ALC) and identified as waiting for discharge to LTC have been placed in a home. There are approximately 1,912 ALC patients still in hospitals waiting for a LTC home (“ALC-LTC patients”).

We received many good ideas about what can be done to help homes meet the needs of new and returning residents, immediately and in the coming months. Your input has already helped us take positive steps such as updating the definition of an outbreak and clarifying that a short-term absence does not include a walk in the nearby vicinity of a home.

Today we are sharing additional changes that will support you in addressing staffing needs and provide extra help to new residents who choose to accept a placement in a home that is not their preferred choice. These changes can be implemented effective April 23, 2021.

Isolation Requirements

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) has issued an updated Directive #3 (attached) with modified isolation requirements for residents who are being admitted / transferred to a home that reflect the impact of vaccination and the latest scientific understanding of incubation periods:

- For **fully immunized* residents**, a lab-based PCR test is required at time of admission/transfer. The individual must be placed in isolation if the test result is pending. If the test result is negative, the individual does not need to isolate.

- For ***partially immunized or unimmunized residents***, a laboratory-based PCR test is required at time of admission/transfer and the resident must be placed in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. In order for isolation to discontinue on day 10, the individual must have a negative test result on day 8.
- ***Recently recovered residents*** who are within 90 days from the date their positive laboratory test was taken are not required to be tested or placed in isolation.

*“Fully immunized” means a person has received the total number of required doses of vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., two doses for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) and it has been at least 14 days since they received their final dose.

Copayments

The ministry will waive the copayment for ALC-LTC patients who agree to move to a LTC home that is not their preferred home. The waiver will apply until they are transferred to a home of their choosing or decline an offer to move to their preferred home, and they will maintain their priority status on the waitlist of their preferred home in the meantime. This change is aimed at supporting ALC-LTC patients’ when considering available placement opportunities in safe, appropriate homes and further enables temporary placements outside of hospitals while they wait for their preferred home.

Single Site Order

Recognizing the success of COVID-19 vaccines and the provincial vaccination program that prioritized LTC homes, fully immunized (see above definition) LTC staff are now able to work in more than one LTC home, health care setting or retirement home (unless otherwise directed by a local medical officer of health). Widespread vaccination in the long-term care sector has meant significant reductions in cases and outbreaks, creating an environment where this change can be made safely to support additional staff capacity in homes.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Health amended the emergency order which provides Ontario Health and Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) the authority to redeploy staff. With this amendment, both regulated health professionals and unregulated staff can be redeployed to long-term care homes and retirement homes to facilitate and support placements. Such redeployments could be considered as part of the discussions homes have with local placement coordinators.

We continue to be grateful to all of you for your ongoing support and dedication to residents. We have attached some Qs and As to help explain these changes. As always, we are available to support homes directly should you have any questions. My team can be reached by emailing MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Erin Hannah

Attachments:

- Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
- Qs and As

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response, MOH
Mel Fraser, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Services, MOH
Tara Wilson, a/ADM, Hospitals and Capital Division, MOH
Jeff Butler, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Pandemic Response, MLTC
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Monika Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Michael Jacek, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health
Catherine Brown, COVID Executive Lead, Ontario Health