

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Office of the Associate Deputy
Minister, Long-Term Care Policy
and Pandemic Response

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Ministère des Soins de longue durée

Bureau du sous-ministre associée
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April 29, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees

FROM: Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister
LTC Policy and Pandemic Response

SUBJECT: LTC Access to Antivirals

Ontario [announced](#) the expansion of access to COVID-19 antiviral treatment on April 11, 2022.

Antiviral treatments include Paxlovid, an oral antiviral medication available by prescription for people with COVID-19 who are at higher risk of progressing to severe disease requiring hospitalization. The [Ontario Science Table](#) recommends Paxlovid for certain higher risk people with mild symptoms. A physician or nurse practitioner must determine if treatment is right for a patient – eligibility is based on clinical judgement.

Paxlovid must be administered within five days of symptom onset to be effective.

Long-Term Care Residents

LTC residents may be eligible to receive Paxlovid if:

- They are at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 based on a clinical assessment by their primary care provider in the home or another health care provider,
- Have tested positive (PCR, rapid molecular, or rapid antigen test),
- Are mildly ill and are within five days of symptom onset, and
- Do not have [contraindications or drug interactions](#) that prevent them from taking Paxlovid.

Drug-drug interactions leading to potentially serious and/or life-threatening reactions are possible. Contraindications and interactions must be carefully considered before Paxlovid is prescribed. Other treatments can be considered for patients if Paxlovid is not appropriate.

Where possible, long-term care primary care providers are encouraged to prioritize assessments for patients who may be eligible for antivirals, given the timing constraints on administering treatment. This includes pre-assessing their residents for eligibility for antivirals in advance of a positive COVID-19 test or symptoms. Ontario Health's [Access to COVID-19 antiviral treatment \(Paxlovid\)](#), Ontario Science Table's [clinical guidance](#) and the [Centre for Effective Practice](#) provides additional information for primary care providers.

All LTC contracted pharmacies can order Paxlovid. In emergency situations, homes may access Paxlovid from a secondary pharmacy service (including after-hours).

Attached is a fact sheet to support sharing information with residents, caregivers and family members.

Should homes require additional support accessing antivirals or for any questions regarding access, they could contact the following Ontario Health regional contacts:

- **Central:** Amy Khan (Amy.Khan@ontariohealth.ca) and David Pearson (David.Pearson@ontariohealth.ca)
- **East:** Farrah Hirji (Farrah.Hirji@ontariohealth.ca) and Leah Bartlett (Leah.Bartlett@ontariohealth.ca)
- **Toronto:** TOtherapeutics@ontariohealth.ca
- **West:** Jennifer Mills Beaton (Jennifer.MillsBeaton@ontariohealth.ca) and Karen Bell (Karen.M.Bell@ontariohealth.ca)
- **North:** Jennifer MacKinnon (Jennifer.MacKinnon@ontariohealth.ca)

Long-Term Care Staff and Caregivers

LTC staff and caregivers who are considered higher risk are encouraged to reach out to their health care provider to be assessed if they think they might be eligible for Paxlovid.

A positive test is required as part of the assessment for antiviral treatment. Staff and caregivers can also access Ontario's antiviral [screener tool](#) to assist in determining if they may be at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 and may benefit from an antiviral. Individuals can also get assessed at one of the [Clinical Assessment Centers](#). There is a [list of pharmacy locations](#) that have access to Paxlovid and can fill prescriptions.

Please share this important information with your LTC residents, caregivers, families, staff, primary care providers and pharmacy service providers.

As always, should you have questions you may contact us at MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister

- c: Nancy Matthews, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)
Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery
Division, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics
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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
Colleen Geiger, President, and CEO (Acting), Public Health Ontario
Jeff Butler, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Operations Division, MLTC
Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health
Cynthia Martineau, CEO, Home, and Community Care Support Services