

May 4, 2021

MEMO TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees

FROM: Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister

SUBJECT: Updated Directive #3 and New MLTC Guidance Document

Like you, ministry staff have been immersed in the final report of Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission since its release on April 30th. I want to start by echoing the Commission's deep appreciation for residents, their family members, loved ones and the people on your teams who work in homes every day for their courage during this pandemic. The tragic impact the pandemic has had on the people who lived and worked, and those who continue to live and work in long-term care homes must be at the forefront of every action we collectively take to evolve the ongoing response and advance our path to recovery.

It is with this sense of purpose that I write to you today to share the next steps we are taking to improve quality of life for residents. We are in a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, where variants of concern underscore the need for ongoing vigilance and immunization provides the chance to respond to calls for safe practices that give residents back a sense of life, of joy, and of agency in their homes.

Long-term care homes are first and foremost the homes of their residents and must be places of safety and comfort for residents, where they can live with dignity and have their needs met. Today, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, we are releasing ministry guidance to help homes operate safely while responding to the mental, emotional and social needs of residents and their caregivers. This guidance is a complement to a newly updated Directive #3 also released today and has benefited from the advice and reflections of the LTC Response and Recovery Advisory Committee and the input and feedback received by many partners through various channels.

****New* Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario ("guidance document")***

The new MLTC guidance document provides homes with foundational guidance and information to help interpret and meet requirements set out by the government with respect to the pandemic (e.g., such as those set out in Directive #3).

The guidance document also sets out how long-term care homes can safely resume certain activities with precautions that are based on their overall immunization coverage rates in the home. This includes the resumption of communal dining, indoor events and gatherings among residents.

As well, residents who are fully immunized and caregivers who are fully immunized may choose to have close physical contact and touch (e.g., hugging, holding hands) beyond what is required for care and supervision. Fully immunized caregivers may also join a fully immunized resident during mealtime. We expect homes will operationalize the guidance set out in the document as soon as feasible.

Please refer directly to the [MLTC Guidance Document](#) for detailed information.

“Updated” Directive 3 for Long-Term Care

An updated version of Directive #3 has been issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and is effective immediately. The updated Directive provides additional clarity on a range of topics including IPAC practices, accommodations, use of PPE and required operational practices. Some key changes and clarifications include:

- That all residents can be absent for essential outings like exercise, groceries or pharmacy trips, medical appointments or for compassionate reasons regardless of vaccination status.
- Providing for active screening of staff and visitors to be done once per day, at the beginning of their shift or visit.

Please refer directly to Directive #3 (attached) for detailed information. This updated version will also be available online soon.

With these two latest documents, and the direction and guidance contained within, you will need to review and update the policies/procedures in your homes with a primary focus on safe opportunities within current requirements that respond to residents’ needs and improve their quality of life. We are at a point in the pandemic where hope can guide our collective efforts and actions. This will not be easy. We are confident that with the strengths, flexibility, creativity and dedication of all partners, we can continue to move forward to a new normal.

We continue to be grateful to all of you for your ongoing support and dedication to residents. As always, we are available to support homes directly should they have any questions related to the new MLTC guidance document and/or the updated Directive #3. The team can be reached by emailing MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Erin Hannah

Attachments:

- **MLTC COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario**
- **Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007***

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)
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 and Recovery Division, MOH
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics Division, MOH/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
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