

January 15, 2021

### **A message for our families**

With the provincial government's emergency stay-at-home order in effect as of Thursday, January 14, we wanted to take this opportunity to connect with a quick update. As public health officials urge caution due to high community transmission of COVID-19, we hope you are staying well, and want to reassure you that our teams are working tirelessly to keep your loved one safe and fill their days with kindness and caring.

While the stay-at-home order is aimed at limiting people's mobility and reducing the number of daily contacts with those outside an immediate household, we want you to know that this does not impact the care or services delivered in our Homes. Our team members are essential and continue to provide your loved one with the excellent care and quality of life that they need and deserve. These enhanced measures do not impact the current requirements for essential visits to our Homes. We understand the importance of keeping residents and families connected and our Homes continue to welcome visits from designated family caregivers.

Getting as many residents, staff and designated family caregivers vaccinated as soon as possible is one of our most urgent priorities. This week, there were many smiles and happy tears as residents at several of our Homes received the COVID-19 vaccine. We're excited to take this long-awaited step forward to protect our residents and appreciate the support of Public Health as they continue to make decisions about vaccine prioritization and rollout. If you are on Facebook, we invite you to visit the [peopleCare Communities](#) page as we share vaccination stories and other #HeartfeltMoments.

As we focus on the well-being of our residents, staff, families and communities, we continue to work under ministry directives and follow public health guidance that aims to keep everyone safe. Enhanced measures are in place to protect those in our Homes, including universal masking, active screening and frequent testing of staff.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care recently announced that LTC homes may begin testing with the Panbio COVID-19 rapid antigen test that gives results in 15 minutes. In addition to the PCR diagnostic tests that are currently the standard in Ontario LTC homes, we look forward to having a new tool to test staff and are working to make sure we're sufficiently resourced to roll this out in all our Homes.

Currently, we are not testing designated family caregivers when they visit our Homes. We sincerely appreciate your support and understanding at this time and will let you know if we're able to make a change in the future. If you are your loved one's designated family caregiver, while we remain in the Grey (Lockdown) zone of Ontario's colour-coded response framework, you will need to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past week, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive.

Since day one, our commitment to keeping your loved one safe and healthy remains steadfast. As we continue to keep families informed and engaged, we are truly grateful for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Please stay well, and as always, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Director of your specific peopleCare Home at any time if you have questions or concerns.