

February 4, 2021

A message for our families

As our top priority is always the health and well-being of our residents, families, staff and others who spend time in our Homes, below is an update on COVID-19 testing. As per a new directive from the Ministry of Long-Term Care, our Homes will begin using rapid tests for families and visitors in the coming weeks.

With results in just 15 minutes, the Panbio COVID-19 Ag rapid antigen test is used for screening asymptomatic individuals at point-of-care. We have implemented piloting of rapid testing in our Homes over the past few weeks for a variety of use cases, and we look forward to extending this tool to our families and visitors to support us in keeping everyone in our Homes safe.

Through a phased approach, the Ministry is requiring that the new rapid testing program be fully operational in our Homes within the next few weeks. Until then, family members will need to continue completing their COVID tests at an assessment centre.

Once the new rapid testing program is implemented, family members will need to complete a rapid test each time they arrive at the Home and confirm a negative result before visiting their loved one. One of the benefits is that weekly tests will no longer need to be done at an assessment centre, as results will be available on-site.

As per Ministry guidelines, those who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 still need to complete a rapid test each time they visit our Homes. Individuals who have previously tested positive for the virus within the past 90 days should not be re-tested due to persistent shedding.

Although we miss seeing all our families in our Homes, we are following directives and public health guidance that aims to keep everyone safe and are only able to receive designated family caregivers and essential visitors at this time. We understand the importance of keeping families and residents connected and engaged, and our [Family Caregiver Program](#) includes education and resources to support a range of visit options and a safe, uninterrupted presence in our Homes. Our teams are also always happy to support virtual visits, so families can enjoy more #HeartfeltMoments with their loved one.

Our teams continue to go above and beyond to provide our residents with the excellent care and services they need and deserve, and as always, we sincerely appreciate the support and encouragement of our families during this challenging time. We are working closely with the Ministry on a smooth transition to rapid testing to help keep our residents, families and staff protected, and will share further information as it is available.

In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to the Executive Director of your specific peopleCare Home with any questions or concerns.