

May 7, 2021

As vaccination rates in Ontario continue to rise, earlier this week the Ministry of Long-Term Care announced changes to Directive #3 for long-term care (LTC) homes. These changes include updated guidance that aims to promote mental, emotional and social well-being of residents and designated family caregivers, and we appreciate the government is looking to ease restrictions in ways that support quality of life in LTC homes.

One change we will implement immediately is that staff and designated family caregivers no longer need to complete the exit screening process when leaving our Homes. Many of the other changes would not come into effect until after Ontario's Stay at Home order is lifted, which means we have some time to make thoughtful decisions over the next few weeks about the best way to make adjustments – for example around visiting and outings - in ways that align with our goal to balance safety and quality of life.

While we spend time carefully reviewing the updated Directive in relation to our current practices, so that we are prepared for next steps, we want to reassure families that we are doing everything we can to keep life in our Homes as happy and normal as possible. For instance, our residents continue to enjoy communal dining and socially distanced group activities. Our [Family Caregiver Program](#) is also enabling hundreds of designated family caregivers to spend time in our Homes with their loved ones every day. In fact, just last week, our teams supported over 1,600 caregiver visits, through education, personal protective equipment and opportunities for COVID testing and vaccination. We encourage families who feel this program could work for them to speak with the team at your specific peopleCare Home for more information.

We are very grateful that LTC was prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine as we've seen a dramatic decrease in outbreaks and cases in LTC Homes. With transmission of COVID still high in many areas of the province, we're working closely with public health and our local health system partners to find new ways to support everyone in our Homes and communities to get their first dose as soon as possible – including onsite vaccination and community clinics.

We will continue to keep families updated around any changes to the precautions and measures that are in place in our Home in the coming weeks. Don't forget to check out our Facebook page to stay connected on life in our Homes – the photos of residents and staff making the most of each day are sure to bring a smile to anyone's face. Please don't hesitate to connect with the Executive Director of your specific peopleCare Home with any questions.