

Ministry of Health

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March 13, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Supportive Housing, Hospices and other congregate care settings

FROM: Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ministry of Health

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Updates: Visitors**

The Ministry of Health (“ministry”) continues to coordinate the response to COVID-19 with support from the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility and other key stakeholders. We will continue to keep the sector updated as relevant recommendations and plans arise from these discussions.

As the situation in Ontario evolves, the ministry continues to be committed to maintaining the safety of vulnerable residents in various congregate care settings. In order to ensure a safe and secure environment for residents, we strongly recommend that these settings only allow essential visitors until further notice. We will reevaluate this measure in the coming weeks and ensure consistency with my recent guidance on enhanced public health measures.

The ministry is identifying essential visitors as those who have a resident who is dying or very ill or a parent/guardian of an ill child or youth in a live-in treatment setting. These visitors must continue to be actively screened into these settings. The attached screening tool can be used as a guide. Those who fail screening will not be permitted to enter. No other visitors should be permitted to enter these premises, instead they should be asked to keep in touch with loved ones by phone or other technologies, as available.

The safety and well-being of our vulnerable residents is our top priority. We will continue to monitor this situation closely and ensure that we are prepared. If there are any related questions or concerns, we encourage you to reach out to your ministry partners. For questions related to COVID-19 specifically, you can also contact the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre at 1-866-212-2272 (24/7) or during business hours at eocoperations.moh@ontario.ca.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

David Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPS
Chief Medical Officer of Health