

**Ontario Enhancing COVID-19 Protections for Long-Term Care
Residents, Families and Staff
Top Q&As
April 10, 2020**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

- 1. Can you provide more information on the process for filling staffing shortages? What are the requirements for filling these shortages?**

The Ontario government has launched a new [Health Workforce Matching Tool](#) to help match skilled frontline care givers with employers. All long-term care homes are encouraged to input job postings so they can fill critical roles.

In addition, the Ontario Long-Term Care Association has a tool for Ontario's Health students who are uniquely qualified to support long-term care homes. Learn more here: <http://ltc.tazwiz.com/>

All new workers hired to help long-term care homes cope with COVID-19 should be screened to ensure they are qualified and present no risk to long-term care home residents.

- 2. What do I do if our long-term care home has a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

Ontario is responding to long-term care homes personal protective equipment (PPE) inventory needs daily. We are tracking where critical issues are (outbreaks, for example) and how to best distribute new PPE in real-time.

If a long-term care home has a shortage of PPE, they should take the following steps:

1. Work with their regular supplier to see when they will get regular shipments of PPE and equipment.
2. Work with other local health care providers to see if they have supplies that they can share.
3. Complete the Regional Table template to send the request for PPE and equipment to the Regional Table Lead for their region.

4. Notify their ministry inspector that they have escalated the issue to the Regional Table Lead.
 5. If additional assistance is required, long-term care homes can contact the Ministry's Emergency Operations Centre through a designated email: EOCLogistics.MOH@ontario.ca, and they will do their best to help support these requests.
3. **How do we know when our long-term care home will get more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?**

Ontario is continuing to ensure that there are adequate supplies for those homes in critical need. The Ministry Emergency Operations Centre (MEOC) defines 'critical need' as a 2-day supply remaining.

4. **What happens if a resident's family removes them from a home during an outbreak?**

Residents who leave a long-term care home temporarily during an outbreak at that home are not permitted to return to the home for their safety and protection.

During an outbreak, all admissions and re-admissions are stopped. Once the home is cleared from an outbreak, and it is safe for the resident to return, their re-admission into the home would be expedited due to the recent amendments to Ontario Regulation 79/10 (Regulation) under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 (LTCHA).

5. **What are the requirements for a resident to be re-admitted to a long-term care home from a hospital visit?**

Based on direction from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, long-term care homes must screen new admissions and re-admissions for symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19. All new residents must be placed in self-isolation upon admission to the home and tested within 14 days of admission. If test results are negative, they must remain in isolation for 14 days from arrival. If test results are positive, then report as a confirmed case and follow case management protocol.

Please note that during an outbreak, all admissions and re-admissions are stopped. Once the home is cleared from an outbreak, and it is safe for the

resident to return, their re-admission into the home would be expedited due to the recent amendments to Ontario Regulation 79/10 (Regulation) under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 (LTCHA).

6. Are lab and imaging personal considered essential visitors?

Based on direction from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health from April 8, 2020, essential visitors include a person performing essential support services (e.g. food delivery, phlebotomy testing, maintenance, and other health care services required to maintain good health).

A copy of the directive can be found at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/dir_mem_res.aspx

If an essential visitor is admitted to the home, the following steps must be taken:

1. The essential visitor must be screened on entry for symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature checks and not admitted if they show any symptoms of COVID-19.
2. The essential visitor must also attest to not be experiencing any of the typical and atypical symptoms. The essential visitor must only visit the one resident they are intending to visit, and no other resident.
3. The essential visitor must wear a mask while visiting a resident that does not have COVID-19.
4. For any essential visitor in contact with a resident who has COVID-19, appropriate PPE should be worn in accordance with Directive #1.

7. How will congregate dining be affected by the announcement prohibiting gatherings of five people?

Where possible, homes are asked to limit the number of people who are gathered in one setting. Homes are asked to use strategies such as having people eat at different times and practicing physical distancing in shared spaces. If this is not feasible, homes are asked to take all necessary precautions to ensure all residents are safe while they eat or complete other activities as a group.

8. Is COVID-19 related hospital admission still a decision to be made by the resident's doctor, or is their guidance from the province to treat the seniors where they are?

Long-term care homes should be communicating with the local acute care hospital regarding a COVID-19 outbreak, including how many residents are in the facility, and how many may potentially be transferred to hospital if ill, based on advanced care directives.

All referrals to hospital should be made through emergency department triage.

If a resident is referred to a hospital, the home should coordinate with the hospital, local public health unit, paramedic services and the resident to ensure safe arrangements for travel that maintain the resident in appropriate isolation precautions.

Residents with severe illness should be transferred to hospital by ambulance. Patient transfer services should not be used to transfer a resident from the home with confirmed COVID-19.

In addition, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a Directive on March 30, which includes information for long-term care homes with COVID-19 cases and outbreaks
(http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/dir_mem_res.aspx)