

**Ministry of Long-Term Care**

Assistant Deputy Minister  
Long-Term Care Operations Division

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**Ministère des Soins de longue durée**

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October 14, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Long-Term Care Home Stakeholders

**FROM:** Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division  
Ministry of Long-Term Care

**SUBJECT:** Resident Absences from Long-Term Care Homes

As we continue to respond to the increase in cases of COVID-19, I would like to communicate recent updates regarding resident absences from long-term care homes.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health has released an update to COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* (Directive #3), effective October 16, 2020.

The updated directive establishes three types of absences:

- 1. Short term absences** for social or other reasons that do not include an overnight stay. A request must be submitted to and approved by the home. Upon return to the home, residents must be actively screened but are not required to be tested or self-isolate.
- 2. Temporary absences** for social or other reasons that include one or more nights. A request must be submitted to and approved by the home. Upon return to the home, residents must be actively screened and self-isolate for 14 days.
- 3. Medical absences** for medical reasons (such as outpatient visits or a single night emergency room visit). Homes cannot deny a resident's request to leave the home for medical visits. Residents do not require testing or self-isolation upon their return. If the resident is admitted to the hospital at any point, or the emergency room visit takes place over two or more nights (patient is discharged from a hospital), homes should follow the steps outlined in Re-Admissions in Directive #3.

All non-medical absences need to be approved by the home. In the event of an outbreak in the home, or where there is evidence of widespread community transmission as per provincial direction, absences are not permitted except for medical or compassionate reasons.

The City of Ottawa, the City of Toronto and the Region of Peel currently have been identified as public health unit jurisdictions with higher community spread. Residents in homes located in these areas are not permitted to leave on an absence except for medical or compassionate reasons.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care will post updates on any changes to the list of jurisdictions with higher community spread at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-long-term-care-homes-in-areas-visitor-restrictions>

The ministry is also releasing an updated fact sheet on medical absences to support homes in implementing the requirements in Directive #3 and Ontario Regulation 79/10 under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Long-Term Care

c:

Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Policy Division  
Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Capital Development  
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long-Term Care Association  
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario

Attachments:

Directive #3  
Fact Sheet on Medical Absences