

**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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December 24, 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:** **Provincewide Shutdown to Stop Spread of COVID-19**

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As you are aware, the government has [announced](#) a Provincewide Shutdown effective Saturday, December 26, 2020, at 12:01 a.m. to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

On December 26, 2020, Ontario Regulation 363/20: Stages of Reopening under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, will be amended to move all public health units into the Grey zone. As a reminder, the requirements and restrictions applicable to long-term care homes in Grey zones include the following:

- **Resident absences** – pursuant to Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* (Directive #3) issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, short term or temporary absences are not permitted except for medical or compassionate reasons and requests for these absences must be submitted to the home. A long-term care home cannot deny a resident's request to leave for a medical visit.
- **Visitors** – essential visitors are the only type of visitors permitted to visit long-term care homes in Grey zones; general visitors are not permitted to visit. These restrictions are found in the Minister's Directive *COVID-19: Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes* (Minister's Directive) and Directive #3. Pursuant to the Ministry of Long-Term Care's COVID-19 Visiting Policy, a maximum of one caregiver may visit a resident at a time.
- **Testing** – staff, volunteers, student placements, caregivers and support workers must satisfy applicable testing frequency requirements for Grey zones in the Minister's Directive.

Please note that Directive #3 issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to apply to long-term care homes.

The updated Visiting Policy will be effective on Saturday, December 26, 2020. Long-term care homes moving from bi-weekly to weekly surveillance testing as per the Minister's Directive should work to implement the requirements for testing immediately and must not allow anyone into a home who has not met the updated requirements as of January 2, 2021.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across the province.



for 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

Attachments:

COVID-19 Visiting Policy  
Visiting Policy FAQs