

February 24, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees

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

SUBJECT: **Continued suspension of Long-Term Care Home Occupancy Targets until March 31, 2021**

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and dedication to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. We are continuing to work across sectors at the provincial, regional and local levels to respond to the second wave of COVID-19.

Please be advised that the suspension of occupancy targets in effect under the *COVID-19 Emergency Measures Funding Policy* (COVID-19 Funding Policy) that was set to expire on February 28, 2021 **will continue** to be in effect to March 31, 2021.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing efforts to adhere to the requirements for Long-Term Care Homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* (Directive #3) issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Directive #3 provides restrictions on the use of ward beds and requirements for isolation beds, among other things.

To support homes in operationalizing Directive #3, the ministry will release a new guidance document to assist homes in identifying beds that are to remain vacant or should be used only as isolation beds.

Supporting the admission and re-admission of residents in a safe way is important to everyone. As we look to safely increase the number of admissions and re-admissions, we know that local coordination, discussions and partnership will be the cornerstone to this endeavour. To that end, licensees are requested to develop a plan, in consultation with Regional (or Local Health Integration Network) LTC leads to outline the home's approach to safely increasing admissions to any excess vacant beds. These beds are beds that are available for admissions/re-admissions and are in addition to those being kept vacant due to restrictions on ward beds or for use as isolation beds (the beds reported as "vacant beds available for new residents" in the weekly occupancy data).

These plans are intended to help licensees safely increase occupancy, while continuing to comply with the restrictions for beds in ward rooms and the requirements for isolation beds under Directive #3. Coordination and communication between the home and the local placement coordinator on the development of the plan is critical, and we ask that you work together to have your plan in place **no later than March 12, 2021**. We recognize that adjustments to your plan will need to be

made on an ongoing basis (e.g. should public health measures be modified or where homes experience more stability, or when homes go into outbreak).

As every long-term care home is unique, the admissions plan will also be unique. The plan should include a realistic admission target that includes an approach that aligns with:

- Maintaining the necessary number of vacant beds to meet the restrictions and requirements under Directive #3 for beds in ward rooms and beds for isolation.
- Ensuring the home has sufficient staff to support isolation upon (re)admission (as per Directive #3) and the ongoing care of newly (re)admitted residents. This may include a strategy for hiring and training new staff, as needed.
- Complying with public health requirements and guidance, including availability of personal protective equipment.
- Complying with the admission requirements in the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*.
- Working with the placement co-ordinator to ensure up-to-date information about vacant beds in the home that are available for occupancy is communicated in a timely manner.
- All other applicable laws.

The admission plan should also align with the home's infection prevention and control (IPAC) protocols to enhance resident safety and prevention of COVID-19.

We understand the need for a measured approach to increase admissions and readmissions, in a manner that complies with all applicable laws and public health guidance, in order to put resident safety first. To achieve that, and in recognition of the complexities related to admissions during this pandemic, occupancy targets for homes will be reviewed and communicated regularly.

Thank you for your continued service and dedication as we work together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Original Signed By)

Sheila Bristo
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Long-Term Care

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