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Next Review 07/2023

Owner **Megan Garland**  
Area **LTC-IPAC**

## IX-N-10.44 Visitors (COVID-19) (ON)

### POLICY:

To ensure a safe environment that follows provincially mandated protocols regarding physical distancing, this policy and procedure provides guidance for how visiting can be scheduled and facilitated across the organization's care communities in accordance with Directive #3 issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The role that families, friends, and visitors play in providing caregiving and emotional supports is important to the quality of life for long term care residents.

Long term care team members and placement students are not considered visitors, as their access is determined by the care community. Volunteers are not permitted access to the care community during the pandemic.

Attending physicians or nurse practitioners who meet the definition of long term care staff under the *Long Term Care Act, 2007* are subject to the team member COVID-19 testing guidelines (reference IX-N-10.42 Team Member Surveillance Testing COVID-19 (ON)).

**Note:** Visitor protocols may change across regional jurisdictions as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health's direction and will supersede this policy requirement.

### PROCEDURE:

The Administrator or designate will:

1. Establish designated outdoor/indoor area(s) for visits to occur, while respecting the requirement of physical distancing.
2. Establish the flow of team, resident, and family movement to and from visiting area(s), ensuring minimal traffic through the location/resident home areas.
3. Ensure there is an outdoor/indoor space designated to greet and screen visitors prior to the

visit.

4. Communicate with residents and families the process for indoor/outdoor visits, prioritizing emotional and/or clinical decline of residents.

The Director of Nursing or designate will:

1. Be accountable for the process of scheduling family visits, maintenance of protocols, documentation, and auditing.
2. Document essential visitors who are designated as caregivers in the resident profile section of electronic health record and on the Designated Caregiver & Attestation Form.
3. Communicate designated caregivers and the care needs provided to the interprofessional team.
4. Inform the resident/SDM that the care community must be notified of any changes in who is assigned as the designated caregiver(s).
5. Ensure visitors are educated about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
6. Ensure caregivers, general visitors, and designated caregivers have attested (by signing the Designated Visitor Attestation Form) prior to visiting any resident for the first time and at least once every month thereafter that they have read and reread the following documents:
  - The Visitor policy
  - Public Health Ontario's document entitled Public Health Ontario's Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Watched/Re-watched the following Public Health Ontario videos:
    - i. Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment;
    - ii. Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment; and
    - iii. How to Hand Wash
7. Appoint team member(s) to conduct active screening and provide education to all visitors.
8. Ensure the visiting area is cleaned between visits, including cleaning and disinfection of all chairs, rails, and other surfaces.
9. Ensure the visit is documented in the resident's electronic health record.
10. Maintain all records related to the family visiting process, including all changes to designated caregiver(s).
11. Cancel and reschedule visits for any of the following reasons:
  - The care community is located in an area identified as having a higher community spread of COVID-19
  - The care community goes into outbreak
  - Resident is experiencing symptoms or is self-isolating
  - Inclement weather (i.e. heat wave or rain) for outdoor visits
  - Operational needs require team members to support resident care

- Other emergencies (i.e. Code Red)
- As directed by Public Health during an outbreak

The Nurse or designate will:

1. Update the resident's plan of care (profile section) with the care needs provided by the designated caregiver.

All Team Members will:

1. Participate in and support visiting of residents as needed.
2. Guide any visitor with PPE utilization as needed.
3. Seek support from nurse in charge and/or manager(s) to address questions and concerns, including immediate advice to support individual resident and family needs.

The Visitor will:

- A. Participate in the active screening process, perform hand hygiene, and don required PPE during the visit as directed by the care community.
- B. Show proof of being fully vaccinated (2 doses) of COVID-19 vaccine to enter "Resident Care Areas" in the Care Community. Those who do not show proof of vaccination or an approved medical exemption will not be permitted entry.
- C. Those unvaccinated visitors will be assigned "Non-Resident Care Area" on the main floor of the Care Community. Consideration for an in-room visiting will be made upon request and will be determined by utilizing a risk assessment.
- D. Participate in the COVID-19 testing/screening process: Before every visit, visitors must undergo mandatory screening for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen as per COVID-19 Guidance: Considerations for Rapid Antigen Point-of-Care Screening, at the frequencies as prescribed by the current directives. **Note:** *An individual who has previously had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 AND was cleared should generally not be re-tested before 90 days unless there are clinical indications that are determined by their physician or advised by public health. Previously positive individuals should provide proof of clearance from Public Health prior to resuming the visits.*
- E. Coordinate with the Recreation and Leisure Manager/designate and obtain approval prior to bringing any pets to the care community.
- F. Ensure that gifts, foods, or beverages brought are only consumed by the resident that they are visiting.
- G. Practice physical distancing with other residents whom they are not visiting and team members.
- H. Adhere to PPE requirements.
- I. Visitors using the outdoor visiting space may be exempt from testing provided they are screened prior to the outdoor visit, and ensure physical distancing of 6 feet is maintained for duration of visit. Un-tested visitors are not permitted to escort residents from the care area.

**NOTE:** Any non-compliance with the visitor responsibilities in this policy will result in discontinuation of the visit for the non-compliant visitor.

## References:

CMOH Directive #3 available at: [https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH\\_HPPA.pdf](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf)

MOH COVID-19 Guidance: Considerations for Rapid Antigen Point-of-Care Screening available at: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/Antigen\\_Screening\\_Guidance\\_2020-12-30.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/Antigen_Screening_Guidance_2020-12-30.pdf)

MOH COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance Update available at: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_testing\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_guidance.pdf)

## Attachments:

IX-N-10.44(c) Designated Caregiver & Attestation Form (ON)

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### Attachments

[IX-N-10.44\(c\): Designated Caregiver & Attestation Form \(ON\)](#)

[Risk Assessment May 2022 Final.docx](#)

[Visiting at a Glance.docx](#)

### Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Director Approval	Megan Garland: Director, Long Term Care & Senior Services	07/2022