

Key Messages: COVID-19

Visitation Long Term Care Homes

March 23, 2020

- Older adults and people with chronic health conditions are particularly vulnerable to infection with COVID-19 and an increased risk of complications. The well-being of people in our residential care settings is paramount. We are working closely with the regional health authorities to implement precautions to minimize the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak in residential care homes.
- As of end of visiting hours on Monday, March 23, 2020, all long term care homes shall restrict access to all visitors, with one exception, visiting a resident at end of life. In such cases, family will be notified that visitation is permitted. Staff of the home will ensure measures are in place to minimize risk of infection through use of personal protective equipment, hand hygiene and social distancing. All people attempting to enter a home will be screened by staff.
- All resident day passes are discontinued, except in the most extenuating circumstances, which must be approved by a manager of the home. In such circumstances, the resident and their escort are given education about infection prevention and control measures, including use of personal protective equipment, social distancing and hand hygiene. The resident and escort are advised that where there is a risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 this may result in isolation of the resident upon return to the home or the resident may not be allowed entry into the home.
- These restrictions will be in place for the next two weeks at which time they will be reviewed.
- Where residents/families are choosing to ignore visitation restrictions and put themselves and others at risk, the home has the ability to require a resident to enter quarantine or may result in eviction from the home.
- This is a difficult situation for residents and their families. Therefore, families are encouraged to communicate with their loved one in residential care by phone to explain that they cannot visit. Staff of the homes will assist residents in making contact with family. Families can also call residential care homes regularly for updates on their loved one.
- Residents will be monitored by staff of the home who will provide supportive care as appropriate. Residents and families who are finding it difficult to cope or feel anxious, will be supported to access mental health supports which may include access to a trained mental health peer supporter by calling the Provincial Warm Line (1-855-753-2560), open 9am to 12 midnight. If residents or families are experiencing a mental health crisis, call the Mental Health Crisis Line available 24/7 (1-888-737-4668) or use the Crisis Text service by texting 686868. Additional information about the many options to support staff and residents well-being can be found at bridge the gapp www.bridgethegapp.ca.