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MANAGING VISITORS – COVID-19 (ON) POLICY #IX-N-10.44

POLICY:

To ensure a safe environment that follows provincially mandated protocols regarding physical distancing, this policy and procedure provides guidance on how visiting can be facilitated at Sun Parlor Home in accordance with Provincial guidance. 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.

Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the COVID-19 virus in determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate. Where it is not possible or advisable for in-person visits, the home will continue to provide virtual visiting options.

Vaccination continues to be one of the most effective ways to protect families, communities, and ourselves against COVID-19. Evidence indicates that the vaccines used in Canada are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.

Keeping COVID-19 vaccinations up to date, including getting booster doses as recommended, will help protect an individual against serious illness and other complications of COVID-19 infection.

This policy is guided by the following principles as outlined by Ontario Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care:

Safety: any approach to visiting in a Long-Term Care (LTC) home must consider, balance, and meet the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors to ensure risks are mitigated.

Emotional Wellbeing: allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional wellbeing of residents and their families/friends, through reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

Equitable Access: all individuals seeking to visit a resident must be given equitable visitation access, consistent with resident preference and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

Flexibility: the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the LTC home, and its current status with respect to availability of Personal Protective Equipment, staffing availability, and any other key factors must be considered.

Equality: residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, resident and/or their substitute decision makers have the right to designate caregivers.

DEFINITIONS:

Team members: for the purpose of this policy, except where otherwise indicated, any permanent and contract, full-time, part-time, and casual: employee, agency staff, contracted healthcare professional, paid trainee, and student under clinical placement providing care to residents of the Home.

The definition does not imply or create an employer/employee relationship where none exists, and it is used solely in the context of this policy to differentiate care community team members from Private Caregivers/Companions.

There are four types of Essential Visitors:

1. *Support Worker:* a person visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the Sun Parlor Home include a person performing essential support services. This may be direct (i.e. phlebotomy, physician, nurse practitioner, hair dressing) or indirect (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, IT services, or health care services).
2. *Essential caregivers:* a visitor designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker and is visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, emotional support, relational continuity and assistance in decision making).
3. *Palliative Resident Visitors:* a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident.
Please note: any palliative residents that has a visitor who fails screening will have isolation precautions put in place. If this is the case visitors are to follow directions for visiting an isolation resident as described below.
4. *Government Inspector:* with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

All other visitors who do not fall into the essential visitor category above are considered general visitors.

General Visitors: family members, friends or other individuals coming to the home to provide non-essential services or for social reasons and who does not fall into another category. General visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Children under the age of 2 year are permitted and are not considered visitors.

PROTOCOLS AND PRACTICE STANDARDS:

As the pandemic situation evolves in Ontario, direction regarding visits to Sun Parlor Home (SPH) will be adjusted as necessary keeping the safety and emotional wellbeing of residents and team members at the forefront. Visitor protocols may change as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health's direction or at the direction of the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Long-Term Care and will supersede this policy requirement.

The following baseline requirements must be in place for the home to accept any visitors. The home has established:

- A process for communicating with visitors and the associated procedures for visits, including but not limited to, infection prevention and control (IPAC), scheduling and any home-specific policies.
- Protocols to maintain the highest of IPAC standards prior, during and after visits.
- A space designated for visitors to passively screen prior to their visit.

Regarding all Visitation (Essential Caregivers and General Visitors):

1. Visitation programs and testing requirements will be restricted or enhanced based on local and Provincial Guidelines.
2. Visitors must comply with SPH protocols including;
 - a. participate in COVID-19 passive screening,
 - b. sign in and out of SPH using the "Visitor Sign-In Sheet"
 - c. don the appropriate PPE as determined by the home based on the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the area and any provincial/local guidance,
 - d. maintaining appropriate conduct while interaction with residents, team members and other visitors.
3. Visitor(s) must only visit the resident they are attending, and no other resident (certain exceptions may apply, e.g. visiting parents that both reside at the home or support workers providing service to more than one resident).
4. If a resident is isolating or the home area is in outbreak, only Essential Caregivers are permitted to visit. There is no limit to the number of Essential Caregivers that can visit at a time for these scenarios. General visitors are to postpone non-essential visits with a resident who is symptomatic and/or isolating, or when the home area is in outbreak.
5. Masks are recommended to be worn by visitors, but not required, in all areas of the home. Personal protective equipment may be required when the home area is in outbreak, when a resident is isolating under additional precautions or as otherwise determined by the home or local Public Health.
6. Alternative locations for visits:
 - a. Visiting outdoors with the resident can occur in the courtyard or on the SPH property.
 - b. Indoor visits may take place in the home area lounges and other designated spaces such as the Garden View Café.
7. Visitors are able to join a resident to a communal meal or activity.
8. Visits may be ended at any time for any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy requirements.
9. Visitors may be cancelled in the event the resident is not feeling well/isolating or in collaboration with local Public Health authorities due to health and safety reasons.

10. Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 and/or have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 will avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors) as well as high risk settings such as long-term care homes for 10 days following symptom onset and/or positive test date (whichever is earlier/applicable). Where essential visits cannot be avoided, essential caregivers are able to visit within the 10-day timeframe if asymptomatic or symptoms have resolved but must notify the home, wear a medical mask, and maintain physical distance.

COVID-19 Immunization:

Partially or Unvaccinated Support Workers, Essential Caregivers, and General Visitors are encouraged to maintain distance between themselves and the resident they are visiting as well as others. The home strongly encourages all individuals who are eligible to become fully vaccinated and remain up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccine.

Regarding Essential Caregivers

1. There is no limit to the number of caregivers a resident/substitute decision maker can designate per resident.
2. Essential caregivers must be 16 years of age or older.
3. Essential caregivers will be determined by the resident/POA and approved by the Director of Care or designate following a review of the submitted Essential Caregiver Request Form (Appendix A).
4. Essential caregivers must review the following training items related to how to safely provide direct care prior to beginning visits. Additional PPE may be required by designated caregivers based on point of care risk assessment. Retraining may be required based on non-compliance with the IPAC practices set out by the home:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-hand-hygiene.pdf?la=en>

https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/nCoV/Factsheet/2021/06/lp/fact-sheet-covid-19-preventive-layers.pdf?la=en&rev=e7b77237c8894221b6fe54e6aae4561e&sc_lang=en&hash=F3CE1DD136245CC6E96A877513AB0536

Regarding Palliative Resident

1. Palliative visitors must participate in passive screening and wear provided PPE as required.
2. If a palliative visitor fails the passive screening, they are to notify SPH and are able to visit but the resident will be placed on isolation precautions as a Health and Safety precaution.

Visitor Non-compliance

1. Team members will provide reminders of the IPAC expectations to the non-compliant visitor and assist the visitor to understand the importance of complying with the visitor guidelines.
2. Visits may be ended at any time for any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy requirements.
3. Team members will refer any visitor who does not comply with the guidelines outlined in the Managing Visitors – COVID-19 policy to a manager/supervisor and submit a Visitor Non-Compliance Form.

PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL VISITS:

The administrator or designate will:

- 1) Distribute letters to family and residents as visitation directions are altered by the Ministry of Health or other government authorities.
- 2) Establish designated outdoor/indoor area(s) for visits to occur, while respecting the requirement of physical distancing and maintaining privacy.
- 3) Establish the flow of team member, resident, and family movement to and from visiting area(s), ensuring minimal traffic through the location/resident home areas.

The Director of Coordinator or designate will:

- 1) Collaborate with resident/families/team members to determine and deem all essential caregivers.
- 2) Ensure visitors are educated about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
- 3) Appoint team member(s) to provide education to all visitors.

The Scheduling Coordinator, Visitation Scheduling Coordinator or Designate will:

- 1) Receive contact from the resident/POA or designate and review homes visitation procedure/expectations.
- 2) Be accountable for the process of scheduling visits as required.
- 3) Cancel and reschedule visits as needed.

The Infection Control Lead or designate will:

- 1) Communicate if SPH goes into outbreak and cancel certain visitation programs as required

All Team members will:

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

All Visitors/caregivers will:

- 1) Participate in the passive screening process upon entry to the home
- 2) Complete “Visitor Sign In Sheet” upon entry and exit to the SPH
- 3) Perform hand hygiene and don the required PPE for the type of visit occurring (if applicable)
- 4) Follow all infection prevention & control measures in place as directed by SPH

References:

COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTCH in Ontario available at:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/LTCH_RH_guidance_PHU.pdf

MOH COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTCH in Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-guidance-document-long-term-care-homes-ontario>

Coronavirus prevention:

- ✓ Wash your hands.
- ✓ Don't touch your face.
- ✓ Cover your cough.
- ✓ Avoid close contact.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect.
- ✓ Stay home.

Sun Parlor Home (SPH) - Essential Caregiver Request Form

Complete this form and return it to SPH. A team member will contact you to review your request

Essential caregivers are designated by the resident or substitute decision maker and are visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity, emotional support and assistance in decision-making).

Essential Caregiver Guidelines:

Essential caregivers are required to participate in passive COVID-19 screening prior to entering the Sun Parlor Home.

The resident/SDM has the right to change who the designated caregiver(s) is/are at any time. Each essential caregiver is required to have their own designated and approved plan.

There is no limit to the number of caregivers a resident/substitute decision maker can designate per resident.

During a home area outbreak situation or when a resident is isolating, there is no limit to the number of caregivers permitted to visit at a time.

Based on the Sun Parlor Home Managing Visitors Policy, Health and safety should be considered by all partial or unvaccinated Essential Caregivers when choosing to visit a resident who is isolating or visiting an area of the home in outbreak when not up-to-date with the COVID 19 vaccine.

The essential caregiver will wear appropriate PPE as determined by the home based on the current prevalence of COVID 19 in the area or Ministry/Public Health guidance. The required PPE will be indicated by the signage outside the resident home area or entrance to resident's room.

Meticulous hand hygiene must be maintained throughout the visit as well as adherence to all infection prevention and control requirements.

A visitor information package will be provided for your review including the home's Visitor Policy. You are required to review the policy and educational materials prior to your first visit. The team member reviewing your request form will confirm this has been reviewed and answer any questions you may have.

Physical distancing is not required for an essential caregiver and the resident they are visiting; however, the caregiver must maintain 2m/6 feet distance from all other residents and staff.

Essential Caregiver Request Form**Resident Name:** _____ **Date:** _____**Family Member/Caregiver Name:** _____**Email address:** _____**Contact Number(s):** _____**Care Service you will be providing:**

- Direct Care (supporting feeding, hygiene, exercise, etc.)
- Emotional Support
- Cognitive Stimulation
- Other (please specify): _____

Please provide additional details of the care services you are planning on providing:

What are your preferences for when you would like to visit? (e.g. Monday, Wednesday, Friday).

Which part of the day will you primarily visit (please select only one):

- Day 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Evening 2 p.m. – 8 p.m.

**Prior to visitor restrictions, how involved were you with the above resident's care?
What was your involvement and frequency of care?**

**Please return this form to the Home directed to the Ward Clerks and a team member
will contact you soon!**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Request Reviewed By: _____

Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination visualized or copy of QR provided: Yes No

Request Approved Request Denied

Reason Denied:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Family/Caregiver Notified of Response

Date: _____ By Whom: _____

Documented

Caregiver attests to reviewing Training information and Visitor Policy provided.