

Seniors Services Policies and Procedures

Policy Details	Policy Index Number and Dates
Manual: Resident Care and Services	Index Number: PCS03-007
Section: General	Implemented: 04-06-22
Subject: Visiting Policy	Reviewed: 10-15-24
Approved By: DLT	Revised: 10-15-24
Cross References: IC01-007: Infection Control – Ethical Framework	Document Applies to: All staff and visitors

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Policy

The Niagara Region Long-Term Care homes (LTCH) will provide an organized process to ensure a safe environment that follows any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice, or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

Purpose

To provide meaningful, equitable and safe access to visits for all residents during non- outbreak situations, during an outbreak of a communicable disease or an outbreak of a disease of public health significance, an epidemic or a pandemic, or another emergency, subject to any applicable laws.

Definitions

Emergency – an urgent or pressing situation or condition presenting an imminent threat to the health or well-being of residents and others attending the home that requires immediate action to ensure the safety of persons in the home.

Essential Visitor:

- (a) A caregiver;
- (b) A support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents (ex. Physician, nurse practitioner, maintenance, PT/OT, dietician);
- (c) A person visiting a very ill or palliative resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care; or
- (d) A government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties (ex. Ministry of Long-Term Care Inspector, Ministry of Labour Inspector, Public Health Inspector).

Caregiver: For the purposes of the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*, a “caregiver” means an individual who,

- (a) Is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,
- (b) Is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*,
- (c) Provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual, or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
- (d) Is designated by the resident or the resident’s substitute decision maker (SDM) with authority to give that designation, if any, and
- (e) In the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be a designated caregiver.

General Visitors – Non-Outbreak

1. On admission, the LTCH will provide the resident and their family / SDM information about home visiting hours through the Resident Handbook.
2. There are no restrictions to visiting hours.

3. There are no age restrictions for general visitors.
4. Visitors are required to come into the home through the main entrance.
5. If visiting in the evening, visitors are encouraged to be mindful of other residents in the area that may be sleeping.
6. Visitors must sign in when arriving to the LTCH and upon leaving the home, visitors must sign out.

General Visitors – During an Outbreak

1. The LTCH will notify the resident's, family, and other visitors of the status of the outbreak and whether visiting will be limited to only essential visitors.
 - a. Homes may limit visitors to only essential visitors as:
 - i. Directed by the local public health unit; or as
 - ii. Directed by the Ministry of Long-Term Care or Ministry of Health

Caregivers

1. The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is entirely the remit of the resident and/or their SDM, and not the Home.
 - a. The resident or SDM will complete the [Caregiver Process and Guidelines Intake Form](https://vine.niagararegion.ca/public/community/senior/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7bD452A72C-ECC2-47BF-96EA-5136B9964EF4%7d&file=Caregiver%20Process%20and%20Guidelines%20Intake%20Form.docx&action=default)
(https://vine.niagararegion.ca/public/community/senior/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7bD452A72C-ECC2-47BF-96EA-5136B9964EF4%7d&file=Caregiver%20Process%20and%20Guidelines%20Intake%20Form.docx&action=default)
 - b. The caregiver will complete the [Caregiver Program Sign-Off](https://vine.niagararegion.ca/public/community/senior/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7b8CE1F59F-7CFF-43AE-ABD2-BE616CE130BD%7d&file=Caregiver%20Program%20Sign-Off.docx&action=default)
(https://vine.niagararegion.ca/public/community/senior/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7b8CE1F59F-7CFF-43AE-ABD2-BE616CE130BD%7d&file=Caregiver%20Program%20Sign-Off.docx&action=default)
 - c. The LTCH must keep written record of the caregiver designation.

2. If a caregiver is under the age of 16, approval from a parent or legal guardian is required to permit them to be designated as a caregiver, if applicable.
3. The caregiver may provide caregiving support to more than one resident in non-outbreak settings, provided the resident and/or SDM provides consent.
4. The caregiver will discuss any training needs (i.e., feeding assistance training) prior to accepting the essential caregiver role.
5. Prior to beginning their role as a caregiver, they will be provided with a Visitor Handout and sent three videos to review: ([Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/r/2012/rpap-recommended-ppe-steps.pdf?la=en) (<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/r/2012/rpap-recommended-ppe-steps.pdf?la=en>); [Putting on Full PPE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2z1uM1fXN8) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2z1uM1fXN8>); [Taking off Full PPE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crGIUX3_4DA) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crGIUX3_4DA); and [How to Hand Wash](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmques72I) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmques72I>)).

Visitor Logs

Every LTCH will maintain visitor logs for a minimum of 30 days which include, at minimum:

- (a) The name and contact information of the visitor;
- (b) The time and date of the visit;
- (c) The purpose of the visit; and
- (d) The name of the resident visited.

IPAC Measures

All visitors (general and essential) will follow these IPAC measures:

1. Must pass passive screening at the beginning of their visit.
2. Must ensure proper handwashing protocols are followed, including performing hand hygiene before and after their visit.

3. Are strongly encouraged to wear a mask during their visit, if this is their preference, but are not required to during non-outbreak situations, unless otherwise directed.
4. Are strongly encouraged to follow directions for PPE requirements when visiting during an outbreak or visiting a resident on additional precautions. Note: The IPAC Program Manager or designate may implement additional IPAC measures in collaboration with public health and / or after completing an Ethical Framework (refer to IC01-007) in collaboration with Resident Council that would enforce additional IPAC measures for the duration of the outbreak.

Communication of the Visitor Policy

- The policy will be shared with Resident's Council and Family Council (if any) any time the policy is revised.
- A copy of the visitor policy will be:
 - Included in resident information packages.
 - Posted on the LTCH Family Information Board.
 - Posted on the LTCH's website.

References / Additional IPAC Education

[McMaster IPAC Education for Caregivers](https://mcmastercche.ca/infection-prevention-and-control) (https://mcmastercche.ca/infection-prevention-and-control)

[Public Health Ontario COVID-19 IPAC Education for Caregivers](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/education-and-events/online-learning/ipac-fundamentals)

(https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/education-and-events/online-learning/ipac-fundamentals)

Table of Revisions

Revision Number	Date	Description	Updated By
1	04-06-22	Implemented	Manager of Clinical Practice, Associate Director of Clinical &

			Support Services, Director of Seniors Services
2	04-08-22	Policy revision under non-outbreak procedure	Director of Seniors Services
3	11-28-23	Policy revision merged caregiver policy with visitor policy	Manager of Clinical Practice
3	04-30-24	Policy revision added addition of essential visitors being permitted during emergencies as defined by the MLTC and included caregiver process	Manager of Clinical Practice
4	10-15-24	Revised – rewording masking as “strongly encouraged” for visitors during outbreaks	Manager of Clinical Practice