

September 9, 2020

For Immediate Release

Resuming Visits in Elgin County's Homes

Elgin County's Long-Term Care Homes staff have worked tirelessly to keep our 247 residents safe from COVID-19. Our approach is measured and cautious. It involves being as prepared as possible to decrease the risk of exposure for our residents.

We remain diligent in protecting our residents as the possibility of spread of COVID-19 still exists in our Long-Term Care Homes. We will continue to take a cautious approach as we work towards implementing the Ministry's most recent announcements regarding visitor access and resident leaves/short stays. Visits and time away from the Home play a vital role in providing care and emotional support for residents. We understand that everyone is looking forward to a time when visitor restrictions are no longer in place. We also know that visitor restrictions have been difficult for residents, families and loved ones.

On August 28, 2020, the *Ministry of Long-Term Care* (MLTC) announced changes to short stay absences for those who leave the Home for health-care related, social, or other reasons and temporary absences for those who leave the Home for more than one night. On September 2, 2020, the MLTC released a document called "*Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care Homes*". It includes a statement that effective September 9, 2020, up to two essential visitors and general visitors are permitted in Long-Term Care Homes.

We are excited about these announcements; however, we are not quite ready to implement the Ministry's relaxed visitor restrictions just yet!

Warden Dave Mennill said, "We have been successful in our efforts to keep our Homes free from COVID-19 thanks to the incredible work of our front-line workers. Now is not the time to lose focus. We require the continued support and understanding of residents and their families to ensure we have time to put appropriate measures in place to keep staff and residents safe."

Elgin County's Long-Term Care Homes look forward to supporting families as they reunite with their loved ones safely and in-person with strict public health measures in place when it is safe to do so. These much-anticipated visits and pre-arranged absences will enhance our residents' quality of life. "We want families and residents to know that our staff are working quickly to ensure our Homes are as prepared as possible for these visits," said Warden Mennill. "These relaxed restrictions will include a revised set of procedures and safety precautions."

We continue to work closely with Southwestern Public Health to develop policies and processes to support essential visitors, general visitors and pre-arranged absences. **In the interim, virtual, window, indoor and outdoor visits remain available; and, processes are in place for short stay absences.**

Families of visitors are encouraged to contact the Home directly to schedule a visit with their loved one:

- Bobier Villa – bvvisits@elgin.ca or 519-671-0289
- Elgin Manor – emvisits@elgin.ca or 226-377-6564
- Terrace Lodge - tlvisits@elgin.ca or 519-641-9135

Enabling safe visits and short stays or absences is a top priority and Elgin County Homes will communicate changes to visitor status soon – please check our website or call the Home for an update. Elgin County will post an update on Friday, September 11, 2020.

We would like to thank the friends and loved ones of our residents for their ongoing support for the Homes Staff as they continue to prioritize the safety of your loved one.

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For additional information, please contact:

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