

A Letter to Residents of Long-Term Care or Retirement Homes, and their Families

October 28, 2020

Dear Residents & Families:

We know that the past seven months have been very challenging for many residents living in Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes, as well as for their families and loved ones.

COVID-19 has proven very serious for older adults and people with complex health needs. The risk to older adults has led to visitor restrictions, lots of testing, a reduction in activities, and many other changes for those who live in group settings.

Each day Southwestern Public Health monitors the number of COVID-19 cases in Oxford County, Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas - as well as those in surrounding areas. We help Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes make decisions about which guidelines to put in place, based on the number of cases we see in our region.

It is critical that we each take personal responsibility for keeping our Homes safe so that visits and other activities can continue. For example, we need you to help us help us limit the spread of COVID-19 between regions. Please post-pone or cancel your visit if the region you are living in has a high active case count (sometimes called a "hot spot").

Visitors



Plan your visit in advance and keep the Home informed.



STAY HOME if you feel sick. Don't take a chance!



While indoors, wear the face-covering you are given so it securely covers your nose, mouth and chin.



Wash your hands often and well.



Maintain a physical distance of 2 meters between your group and other residents and staff within the Home.



If you live in a high risk region, please consider a virtual visit instead of an in-person visit.

Short and Temporary Absences



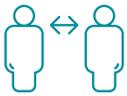
Requests for absences must be approved by the Home's administration.



Any resident who is absent for an overnight or longer, needs to go into 14-day isolation when they return. If this isolation cannot occur for any reason, the overnight stay will not be permitted.



Face-coverings are required in ALL Ontario indoor public spaces. **EVERYONE** is required to wear one for the entire outing (including in your vehicle). If the resident cannot wear a face-covering, please do not leave the Home unless for medical care.



Follow physical distancing requirements while out in the community, in addition to wearing a face-covering.



Carefully consider which activities you attend. Many cases of COVID-19 are traced to weddings, family dinners, funerals and other social gatherings.



Visit only one household and its members per outing. **We recommend a wait time of 14 days between visits to different households.** This reduces the chance of anyone getting sick.

This letter provides our best recommendations on how you can protect yourselves, your fellow residents, and your loved ones, over the coming weeks and months.

Keeping older adults in our communities safe - whether they live at home or in a Long-Term Care Home or Retirement Home - is a shared responsibility. We will only be successful if we all work together. Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and safety of our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Joyce Lock
Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

