



Elgin County Long-Term Care Homes

MEMO

TO: All Bobier Villa, Elgin Manor and Terrace Lodge Residents and Families

DATE: January 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Additional Measures for LTC Homes – COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Residents and Families,

First and foremost, Happy New Year to all residents and families from the staff and management of our three County of Elgin Homes! Although we had hoped that during 2021 we would see the end of the pandemic, COVID-19 continued to impact each of our lives in ways we never would have imagined. On behalf of the Homes, we sincerely thank each and every one of you for your support as we worked together to implement the required pandemic measures to keep everyone safe! We look forward to improvements and increased opportunities for Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes in 2022!

Today, I am writing to inform you that, on December 31, 2021, the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) sent out communication regarding “Pandemic Response Update” additional measures for LTC Homes related to current local and provincial COVID-19 activity, in particular the Omicron variant activity.

Further Enhanced Measures

Although our Homes have been impacted by COVID-19 over the holiday season, to continue to ensure safety for residents and reduce the risk of additional COVID-19 entering and spreading in homes, the following additional measures will be implemented, as per MLTC directives:

1. NEW: Mandatory Boosters

Vaccines continue to be our best defense against Omicron and reducing the risk of infection and serious illness. Emerging evidence suggests that those who have received two doses of vaccine have a significantly higher risk of infection with Omicron compared to those that receive a third (booster) dose. As such, all staff, students, volunteers, support workers, and caregivers who are eligible, will be required to show proof of their third dose to come into or work within the home, unless they have a valid medical exemption.

Effective dates are as follows:

Staff, students, volunteers, support workers and **caregivers:**

- Those who are eligible on or before December 31st, 2021 must provide proof of having received a third dose by **January 28, 2022**.
- The remainder of staff, students, volunteers, and support workers will have until March 14, 2022 to show proof of their third dose, does not apply to those not eligible (e.g. under 18 years of age)

- The remainder of **caregivers** will have until **May 23, 2022** to show proof of their third dose
- Our Homes are currently working with public health to arrange for on-site vaccination opportunities, and will communicate information as available. In the interim, staff and caregivers can book booster appointments on the provincial COVID-19 vaccination portal, by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900, or through select pharmacies and primary care settings. We encourage you to obtain your booster dose as soon as possible to meet the required timelines.

2. NEW: Provision of Fourth Doses to Long-Term Care Residents

There continues to be an increased risk for COVID-19 infection and severe disease in the elderly population due to age and underlying medical conditions, particularly in shared living spaces like long-term care homes. Based on recommendations from the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee, effective immediately, residents of long-term care homes will be eligible for a fourth dose of an mRNA vaccine if at least three months have passed since their third dose. Please refer to the documents below for additional information. Our Homes are currently working with public health to arrange for on-site vaccination of residents for fourth dose – residents/substitute decision maker will be contacted to discuss fourth dose and consent.

3. NEW: Testing and Staff Isolation Requirements

Updated guidance for testing and isolation; and access to testing has been provided; including the ability to potentially recall fully vaccinated staff in circumstances of serious staffing shortages. Please be reassured that this option would be utilized through collaboration with public health.

4. Access to long-term care homes by general visitors continues to be paused, including for outdoor visits

General visitors will continue to be permitted to enter the home to visit residents receiving end of life care.

5. Day absences for all residents for social purposes continue to be paused

All essential, medical or compassionate absences will continue to be permitted.

6. NEW: Gatherings Among Residents

It is important to note that residents can and should continue to socialize and gather in small groups within the home, unless under specific isolation and droplet/contact precautions. This ability to socialize and share their daily lives and experiences with each other is critical to the mental health and emotional needs of residents just like any other Ontarian who shares a home with others.

While the specific limit to social gatherings under the Roadmap to Reopen (of five indoors) does not apply to LTC homes, each home will determine the size of social gatherings among residents that best reflect the realities of the home from a staffing and space perspective in order to ensure these social opportunities are as safe as possible.

Designated caregivers continue to be able to come into homes with a maximum of two per resident at a time; and, limited to one caregiver visitor for resident home areas of Homes in outbreak. We recognize the impact these temporary measures continue to have on residents,



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their families, and homes. The Ministry and the Chief Medical Officer of Health will continue to review policies and monitor all available evidence – any changes will be communicated as available.

Please review the attached documents in full for details regarding the additional enhanced pandemic measures and please speak to a member of the Homes management team if you have any questions:

- [Key Messages to Support Residents and Families \(EN\)](#)
- [Key Messages to Support Residents and Families \(FR\)](#)
- [Key Messages for Consent of 4th Dose \(EN\)](#)
- [Key Messages for Consent of 4th Dose \(FR\)](#)

Additional information, not included in the above documents, includes the following:

- As an additional precautionary measure against the highly transmissible Omicron variant, protective eyewear is **required** by all staff, visitors, support workers, and volunteers who enter the Home.
- Rapid antigen testing results must be complete before entering the LTC Home; essential caregiver visitors are encouraged to adjust their visit time to include 15 minutes for processing of rapid antigen test results.
- Visitors are required to wear their mask and eyewear at all times, and, as such will not be permitted to eat or drink while in the Home. Essential caregiver visitors may attend the designated area to provide meal time support to their loved one.
- Essential caregiver visitors have specific timelines to achieve full vaccination – as such, until the essential caregiver is fully vaccinated, within the attached timelines, visits will continue to be restricted to the resident's room for these visits.

Homes staff will continue to do their best to reassure and provide support to residents and families as we work to implement these temporary required measures to support resident, visitor and staff safety and well-being. We encourage you to visit within the updated guidelines and, if you have any questions, please speak to a registered staff member or manager!

Thank you!

Michele Harris, Director of Homes and Seniors Services
Terri Benwell, Administrator, Bobier Villa & Elgin Manor
Christine Leonard, Administrator, Terrace Lodge