Family, Friends & Residents – Residents Leaving and Returning to Dearness Home

The government has allowed three types of absence from Dearness Home:

- A Short Stay Absence, which does not include an overnight stay (with the exception of single-night emergency room visits)
- Temporary Absences that involve overnight stays outside Dearness Home (after which there is a 14 day, self-isolation period)
- Medical Absences (such as outpatient visits, emergency dental care etc.)

All non-medical Absences need to be approved by the home. In the event of an outbreak in the home, all non-essential Absences will be discontinued.

The resident or substitute decision maker must make an absence request to the home. Dearness Home will review and approve all non-medical absence requests based on a case-by-case risk assessment considering, but not limited to, the following:

- The home’s ability to support self-isolation for 14 days upon the resident’s return.
- Local disease transmission and activity.
- The risk associated with the planned activities that will be undertaken by the resident while out of the home.
- The resident’s ability to comply with local and provincial policies/bylaws.
- Any further direction provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Except for medical or compassionate reasons, the provincial government may choose to suspend absences if they consider the rate of transmission of COVID-19 is too high.

With the support of the Resident and Family Councils, Dearness Home may suspend Short Stay absences for temporary periods where it becomes apparent that the risk of transmission in our community is high. At such times medical and compassionate absences will continue and exceptional requests will be considered.
1. **Arranging a Short Stay Absence**

- A Short Stay Absence does not include an overnight stay, with the exception of single-night emergency room visits.
- Only the Power of Attorney for Care, the substitute decision maker or a cognitively well resident may arrange a Short Stay Absence.
- Applications for Short Stay Absence must be initiated by calling reception (519-661-0400) during business hours (M-F 8:30am-4pm) at least 5 days before the absence.
- Short Stay Absences are restricted to a maximum of 1 per day.
- Residents may be away from Dearness for a Short Stay Absence between the hours of 9am and 4:30pm on Saturday and Sunday, or 9am to 8pm on weekdays.
- Short Stay departures or arrivals cannot occur during the meals (noon till 1pm & 5 to 6pm) or the main shift change for staff (1:30pm to 2:30pm).
- Nursing management will review all Short Stay Absence requests.
- If nursing management denies a Short Stay Absence request, they will communicate this to the resident/substitute decision maker in writing, including the rationale for this decision.

2. **Arranging a Temporary Absence**

- Temporary Absences involve overnight stays outside the building.
- Only the Power of Attorney for Care, the substitute decision maker or a cognitively well resident may arrange a Temporary Absence.
- Applications for Temporary Absences must be initiated by calling reception (519-661-0400 x 8271) during business hours (M-F 8:30am-4pm) at least 7 days before the Absence.
- Nursing management will review all Temporary Absence requests.
- If nursing management denies a request, they will communicate the decision to the resident/substitute decision maker in writing, including the rationale.
- Departures or arrivals cannot occur during the meals (noon till 1pm & 5 to 6pm) or the main shift change for staff (1:30pm to 2:30pm).
3. Medical Absence

Defined as leaving the home’s property for medical reasons (i.e., outpatient visits, single night emergency room visit).

- Dearness Home residents may leave the home for medical visits.
- Residents will not be tested or enter self-isolation upon their return.
- Emergency room visits that take place over a single night (e.g., assessment and discharge from the emergency department spans one overnight period) are considered equivalent to an outpatient medical visit that does not require testing or self-isolation upon return.
- Residents will be provided with a medical mask to be worn when outside of the home (if tolerated) and reminded about the importance of public health measures including maintaining a safe distance of at least two metres from others and hand hygiene.

If the resident is admitted to the hospital at any point, or discharged after two or more nights in the emergency room, Dearness Home will follow the steps outlined under Re-Admissions outlined in Directive #3.

Process for Leaving and Returning to Dearness Home

Leaving Dearness:

- Departures are not permitted prior to 9am and cannot occur during the meals (noon till 1pm & 5 to 6pm) or the main shift change for staff (1:30pm to 2:30pm)
- On the day of the absence, the person picking up the resident must arrive at the entrance, wearing a mask, no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the arranged time (only one person is permitted in the entrance for this purpose)
- The screener will ask the person picking up the resident the screening questions for COVID-19 and take their temperature (if the screen is failed the resident will not leave the building)
- Staff will facilitate the arrival of the resident at the door
  (Note: The resident will have the choice to go out or remain in the Home)
Leaving Dearness (continued):

- The person picking up the resident will be provided with Guidelines for Infection Control during Absence, and with a Travel Log Form. (Note: For possible contact tracing purposes, the Travel Log records where the resident has been and any infection control risks, such as mask removal, that occurred during the Absence)

- When the resident leaves Dearness Home the Screener will:
  o Provide a medical mask and tell them it is to be worn at all times when outside of the Home (if they can tolerate it)
  o Remind them about the importance of hand washing and staying 2 meters apart from others to maintain physical distancing
  o Ensure the resident or the person taking the resident out signs the resident out
  o Remind the resident or person taking them out that the travel log form must be filled in prior to return to the Home

Returning to Dearness:

- Residents must return before 4:30pm on Saturday and Sunday, or 8pm on weekdays
- Arrivals cannot occur during the meals (noon till 1pm & 5 to 6pm) or the main shift change for staff (1:30pm to 2:30pm)
- When residents returns to Dearness Home the Screener will ensure that:
  o The resident and the person bringing them back in perform hand hygiene
  o The resident is fully screened, including the temperature check – a family member may answer the questions for the resident if they are not capable of answering themselves
  o The resident or the person returning them signs the resident back in
  o The travel log is completed and returned
  o Any items returning with the resident are labelled and put into safe keeping
    (Note: Items will be returned to the resident after 72 hours; perishable items are not to be brought back into the Home)