Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines

Please review these guidelines and expectations below

**Changes to the guidelines may occur by the Ontario government during heightened risk times ~ See current communication memos and Dearness Home website for the latest updates**

An Essential Caregiver (EC) is designated by the resident and/or their Power of Attorney or Substitute Decision Maker (POA/SDM) for care. Essential Caregivers, may visit in the resident’s bedroom to provide direct care to the resident (e.g., supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). The ECs may also take their resident to the Patio on their Home Area OR out the front doors for a walk on the Dearness Home grounds (the resident must also be masked, as tolerated).

At Dearness Home:
- A maximum of 2 ECs must be designated for each resident, in writing (note that additional ECs designated prior to December 15th 2021 may continue to visit)
- A resident and/or their substitute decision (SDM) maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:
  - Resident’s care needs that is reflected in the plan of care
  - Availability of an EC; either temporary (e.g., Illness) or permanent
- A resident and/or their SDM cannot continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the Home
- The same person may be designated as an EC for more than one resident, but:
  - the EC may only visit 1 Home area per day
  - the EC may not visit another resident for 14 days after visiting a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic and/or the Home area is in outbreak
- ECs must be at least 16 years of age
- All ECs at Dearness will be educated in person prior to gaining access to the Home, and will review the training package every 3 months thereafter
- All ECs will wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) in the Home and during their visit
- EC access to the Dearness Home ends when the resident is discharged or passes away

COVID-19 can be fatal for those who live in long term care (so keeping COVID-19 out of Dearness Home is extremely important. Accordingly, Essential Caregivers must respect and practice the infection control measures required to keep our residents and staff safe. Before Essential Caregivers come in to the Home to provide care they will receive approximately one hour of in-person education on general expectations and infection control practices (including how to safely
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put personal protective equipment on and take it off). They will also attest to reviewing the visiting policy every month and the training package every 3 months.

If you are the POA or SDM for care, please speak with your loved-one in the Home and your family to decide if you want to designate Essential Caregivers. If so, decide who the Caregiver(s) will be and then please contact Cheryl Gilmour, Manager Community Life by email cgilmour@london.ca or by phone 519-661-0400 x8271 to work with you to arrange a mutually agreed upon training time. Please check all the latest updates on the Dearness Home website https://london.ca/living-london/community-services/senior-supports/dearness-home

General Expectations of Essential Caregivers:
The Essential Caregiver must:

• Before coming to Dearness Home:
  o Read the Dearness Home “Visits During Pandemic” policy each month
  o Attest that you have reviewed the training package every 3 months
  o Come to the Home during COVID-19 visiting hours (9am – 9pm 7 days/week) ALL must pass check in by 7:40pm on M-F AND 4:40pm on Sat/Sun & Holidays.
    Assessment Centre break times: M-F 5-5:30pm and Sat/Sun & Holidays 3:45-4pm.
  o Self-screen at home and do not visit Dearness if there are signs or symptoms of COVID-19
  o Ensure only two Essential Caregivers visit the resident at any given time
  o Read the Dearness Home website for any updates to the current landscape of Government guidelines or changes to visiting

• Upon entering the home:
  o Wear the Essential Caregiver identification sticker on your upper body or where it will be visible at all times
  o Sign in and out at the Entrance/Exit
  o Pass active screening before entering the building at each visit
  o Attest that you:
    ▪ READ THE “VISITS DURING PANDEMIC POLICY” EVERY MONTH?
    ▪ REVIEW THE ESSENTIAL CAREGIVER EDUCATION EVERY 3 MONTHS?
    ▪ HAVE NOT VISITED ANOTHER RESIDENT WHO IS SELF ISOLATING OR SYMPTOMATIC, AND/OR ANOTHER HOME IN OUTBREAK IN THE LAST 14 DAYS
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- Proceed to the COVID-19 testing area (to the left in the lobby) to register with the nurse and be tested, as required
- After testing, stay in the waiting area until informed then proceed to the resident’s room

Vaccination –

The government now allows greater freedoms where both the EC and the resident are fully vaccinated. For the EC to be recognized as fully vaccinated:

- The EC must have received all doses of vaccine required by the government (the Home will robocall and email details when requirements change)
- The official confirmation of all required doses must be shared with Cheryl Gilmour or her delegate

Fully vaccinated ECs will visibly wear an EC sticker when in the Home.

Any EC who believe they have a valid medical contraindication to receiving the vaccine must contact the Home and will be advised on next steps.

Infection Prevention and Control Measures –

The Essential Caregiver must:

Follow all the guidelines provided in the in-person education (also included in the educational hand-out), including:

- Practicing good hand hygiene, prior to entering and upon exiting the home
- Wearing the supplied surgical mask appropriately at all times while in the home and when walking outside with the resident
- Using alcohol-based hand rubs as the preferred method of cleansing (unless hands are visibly soiled, when soap & water would be preferred)
- Where the resident is in isolation, wearing the designated droplet/contact personal protective equipment (surgical mask, eye protection, gloves, and a gown) and following protocol to properly put on PPE and remove PPE
- Asking staff for assistance by using the call bell if unsure how to follow these steps
- Physically distancing:
  - If either the EC or the resident are not fully vaccinated, the EC will remain 2 meters distant from the resident during visits, aside brief hugs
  - If both EC and resident are fully vaccinated, EC may have physical contact with the resident (e.g. holding hand, hugs)
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Essential Caregiver Expectations while in the Home –

The Essential Caregiver must:

• Wear the Essential Caregiver identification sticker on the upper body and ensure it is clearly visible at all times

• Proceed directly to the resident’s room (if the resident is in the common areas, the Caregiver will take them to their room) – Essential Caregivers will not stop to talk to others and will not travel to other areas of the home to visit others

• Stay within the resident’s room and use the call bell if anything is needed outside of the room unless the Essential Caregiver wishes to take the resident to the Home Area’s balcony/patio, or outside of Dearness Home for a walk in the grounds
  (For more information on resident absences from the Home, please see “Residents Leaving and Returning to Dearness Home”)

• Resident meal times:
  o If either the EC or the resident are not fully vaccinated, the EC will remain in the resident’s room if staying to assist through a mealtime (the resident meals will be served in the resident’s room)
  o If both EC and resident are fully vaccinated, EC may choose to join the resident in the dining room to assist and/or at a scheduled Recreation Program
  o The EC’s mask must remain on at all times

• At the end of the visit, directly proceed to exit the building

• Acknowledge that the failure to follow expectations is a serious matter that may result in a discontinuation of Caregiver access

Outbreak Precautions or Failure of Febrile Screening

• In the event a home enters into a COVID-19 outbreak in the resident’s Home area, continuation of visits will be discussed with the Essential Caregiver to review risks of continued visits.

• In the event a resident is isolated, only 1 EC may visit at a time. The Essential Caregiver will be notified that they will be required to wear the appropriate PPE and will discuss whether they wish to continue the visits