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	Subject: Visits During Pandemic

POLICY

The Dearness Home will provide an organized process to ensure a safe environment for visits that follows provincially mandated direction and Public Health infection control protocols. This policy must be read in conjunction with the appended education material and guidance documents.

PURPOSE

Within the ongoing and changing constraints of the pandemic, to seek to maintain emotional well-being by the provision of meaningful, equitable and safe access for visitors.

Not Considered Visitors

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of 1 are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing and vaccination requirements.

VISITOR TYPES

Essential Visitor:

Essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need related to the residents or the operations of the home that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home. They are the only visitors allowed to visit when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or when the Home is in outbreak.

There are 4 types of Essential Visitors:

1. Person visiting a very ill or end-of-life resident:

- End of life period is determined by the physician and communicated to the Power of Attorney/Substitute Decision Maker (POA/SDM for care) by Dearness Home
- Essential Visitors for end of life must be designated by the resident or the SDM/POA
- We ask that a maximum of 4 visitors be present in the resident's room at any time to permit safe physical distancing when staff are providing care
- End of Life Spiritual Care support from the community can also be arranged
- The end-of-Life visitor:
 - Will be screened before entering the Home (but may still enter if the screen is failed)
 - Will wear the butterfly sticker provided, in a visible area of their upper bodies at all times

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- Does not have to observe visiting times
- Must wear a mask at all times
- Must remain in the resident's room aside from entering and exiting

2. Government inspectors with a statutory right of entry:

Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home in accordance with the applicable legislation. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

3. Support Workers:

Support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents. Essential services provided by support workers include but are not limited to:

- Assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
- Assistive Devices Program vendors — for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
- Moving a resident in or out of a home
- Social work services
- Legal services
- Post-mortem services
- Emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
- Maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home's operational systems such as Heating, Cooling and Ventilation (HVAC), mechanical, electrical, plumbing and telecommunication systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance, including septic and well water system maintenance
- Food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
- Canada Post mail services and other courier services
- Election officials/workers

4. Essential Caregiver (EC):

- Type of essential visitor who is designated by the resident and/or their POA/SDM and is visiting 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).

(For full details, in Appendix see Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines)



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General Visitor:

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- To provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident or their substitute decision maker for social reasons (for example, family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity

In addition, general visitors may include persons attending the home for other purposes which may include but are not limited to:

- Personal care service providers (for example, hairdressers, barbers, manicurists, etc.)
- Entertainers
- Recreational service providers
- Animal handlers (for example, as part of therapy animal program)
- Individuals who are touring the home to inform decisions regarding application for

admission At Dearness Home:

- General Visits include outdoor, window and virtual options, and must be scheduled with the Home by the resident or their POA/SDM
- General visitors will be screened and asked to verbally attest they read this policy every month
- General Visits to the outside visiting area are limited by the available space to 2 per visit, whereas visits in the grounds are subject only to any limitations set by the province
- General visitors must comply with Dearness Home’s immunization requirements
- General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult and must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place at the home (for example, active screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control). (For more details, in Appendix see “General Visitor Information, Outside Visit”, “General Visitor Information, Inside Visit” and “Virtual and Window Visits at Dearness Home”

GENERAL INFORMATION

Government COVID-19 Restrictions:

Access to the Home and restrictions to freedoms within and outside the Home will vary according to the current regulations put in place by the Province.

Communication:

Dearness Home will communicate evolving visiting information and policy:

- For Residents: via posting information on noticeboards and/or TV screens and channels, in-person conversations, and/or Resident Council minutes binder



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- For POA/SDM for care: via robo-calls, e-mails and posting information on the Dearness Home website
- For Other potential visitors; via robo-calls and posting information on the Dearness website

Note: Whenever practically possible, visiting changes will be implemented following either discussion with, or prior notice to, both the Resident Council and the Family Council.

Temporary Suspension of General Visits:

If Dearness is in suspected or confirmed outbreak, all non-essential visitations to the Home area(s) involved will be temporarily cancelled.

Visits will also not occur when:

- The resident has suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- When the resident is currently observing droplet/contact isolation precautions
- When government restrictions prohibit general visits, or when a Stay-At-Home Order is in effect (as per O. Reg 265/21)

When directed by the government and/or in accordance with Public Health Unit guidance, Dearness Home may suspend visits for temporary periods where it becomes apparent that the risk of transmission in our community is high.

Shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- If Dearness is not able to supply surgical/procedure masks or other PPE required to ensure infection control, visitors will not be permitted in the Home
- Essential Visitors who wish to enter Dearness on their employer’s instructions may do so if they have appropriate PPE supplied by their employer

RESPONSIBILITY

The Manager, Community Life will monitor and oversee the Family Visits during a Pandemic.

The infection control lead will direct infection control in relation to visits to the Home.

The Administrator will have overall responsibility and draft policy and related guidelines.

PROCEDURE FOR VISITS TO THE HOME:

- The Manager, Community Life will monitor and oversee scheduling visits during the times allotted on designated visit days, and ensure immunization records are maintained for visitors
- The outside visiting areas will be cleaned and disinfected between every visit
- The Home will create and maintain a lists of General Visitors and Essential Caregivers, and of Essential Visitors at the end of life. These lists will be available for relevant/appropriate staff members



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to access

- All visitors seeking access to the Dearness Home and to the Dearness Home outside visitor area will attend at the main entrance and must pass an active screen in order to proceed
- After screening, all visitors entering the Home (aside from Ministry inspectors from MLTC or MLSTD) must go to the Dearness COVID-19 testing centre
- Details of screening questions and staff responsibilities will vary according to applicable government and Public Health Unit guidance, and circumstances in the Home. Required processes will be detailed in internal documents that must be followed by screeners and relevant Dearness Home employees

Determining Priority for Arranging General Visits

Dearness will consider the following:

- How well the resident is doing psychosocially dealing with isolation from family/friends
- Resident decline in condition
- Extenuating family circumstances (i.e. spouse is also isolated)
- Resident/family has not had virtual visits due to the family not having the appropriate technology (i.e. internet, iPad, etc.)

Scheduling General Visits

- Dearness Home will work with the resident, the POA/SDM for care to arrange visits
- Each individual will be scheduled for a visit by the designated staff member
- Every attempt will be made to accommodate a minimum of one visit for each resident per week for at least 60 minutes (if so desired), depending on available staffing resources and physical limitations
- Once scheduled, the visitor will be provided with this policy and related education in person, via email, or be asked to view it on our website, or be able to view it upon arrival

Visitor Requirements (including vaccination requirements and screening, testing and infection control instructions)

All visitors, including General and Essential Caregivers, must provide comply with one of the following:

- Provide proof of having received one of the following prior to visiting:
 - Two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines; or,
 - One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada.



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- Provide written proof of a valid medical contraindication to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (or cannot receive a subsequent dose of a COVID-19 vaccine), provided by either a physician or registered nurse in the extended class, on the Medical Contraindication for Not Being Vaccinated Against COVID-19 Form attached (see Appendix).

This Form must set out:

- That the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 due to a medical contraindication or cannot receive a subsequent dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and
- The effective time-period for the medical contraindication (i.e., permanent or time limited).
 - If the effective time-period of a medical contraindication provided has expired, the person shall provide proof of a COVID-19 vaccination within 30 days of the expiry of the medical contraindication.
- All persons who provide proof of a medical contraindication in accordance with the above shall:
 - Submit to regular testing for COVID-19 and demonstrate a negative result, at intervals to be determined by the Administrator
 - Provide verification of the negative test result in a manner that enables Dearness Home to confirm the result at its discretion.
- For Outside Visits, General Visitors must follow provisions in “Visitor Information for Outside Visits” and the relevant guidance from the “General Visitor Education Handbook” (see Appendix)
- For Inside Visits, General Visitors must follow provisions in “Visitor Information for Inside Visits” and the relevant guidance from the “General Visitor Education Handbook” (see Appendix)
- Essential Caregivers must follow provisions in: “Essential Caregivers, Information Package and Guidelines” and in the “Essential Caregivers Education Presentation” (see Appendix)

NON-ADHERENCE BY VISITORS

The home has the discretion to end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home’s visitor policy, provided:

- The home has explained the applicable requirement(s) for the visitor
- The visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) (e.g., the home has supplied the PPE and demonstrated how to correctly put on PPE, etc.); and
- The visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirement(s)

The home will document when a visit has been ended due to non-adherence.



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TEMPORARILY PROHIBITING A VISITOR

Dearness Home has the discretion to temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home’s visitor policy. In exercising this discretion, Dearness will consider whether the non-adherence:

- Can be resolved by successfully explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements
- Is within requirements that align with instruction in Directive #3 and guidance in the visiting policy by the Ministry of Long-Term Care
- Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors in the home
- Is demonstrated by the visitor over multiple visits
- Is by a visitor whose previous visits have been ended by the home

Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor will:

- Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted;
- Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition;
- Clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed (e.g. reviewing the home’s visitor policy, reviewing Public Health Ontario resources, etc.); and
- Be documented by the home

Appendices:

- Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines
- Essential Caregivers Education Presentation
- General Visitor Information for Inside Visit
- General Visitor Information for Outside Visit
- General Visitor Education Handbook
- General Visitor Virtual and Window Visits at Dearness Home
- Dearness Home Absences and Social Gatherings Snapshot
- Medical Contraindication for Not Being Vaccinated Against COVID-19 Form