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## St. Lawrence Lodge COVID-19 Bulletin

**Issue Date:** April 17, 2020

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide current information regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and to inform people with respect to decisions made by the Home as guided by Public Health and Ministry of Health and Long Term Care policy decisions.

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Covid-19 is likely the biggest public health crisis Canada has ever faced. Lives are at stake, including yours and your loved one's. The care and protection of long term care Residents – and the dedicated staff who look after them – has become a critical issue in Ontario.

Right now, physical distancing and LTC visitor restrictions are essential in combatting Covid-19. We acknowledge how hard this is for all concerned; however, it is necessary to save lives.

It is up to all of us to take steps that keep our loved ones, ourselves, and our communities safe.

Since we don't yet have a vaccine or cure, the best we have is prevention. We all have a role in preventing the transmission of Covid-19. We can prevent the spread of Covid-19 by washing our hands, avoiding contact with people who are frail and vulnerable, and above all, staying home. We are all in this together.

To help manage this global pandemic, the Ontario Government has issued Directives and Emergency Orders that will help Long Term Care Homes to take the steps they need to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of Covid-19 and to provide care to our Residents and support for our staff during the pandemic.

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### **Covid-19 News**

#### **Testing Guidance from the Province**

- On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the Province issued new Directives related to the level of testing that is to be carried out in Long Term Care Homes. The highlights include:

- Any Resident with the following symptoms should be tested:
  - A fever of 37.8 degrees or higher
  - New or worsening respiratory conditions such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, nasal congestion, difficulty swallowing.
  - Evidence of pneumonia.
- A Resident WITHOUT symptoms who lives in the same room as a Resident who HAS symptoms must be tested, as well.

### **Current Status**

As a result of the expanded screening and testing requirements, the Home reports the following updates, as of April 17<sup>th</sup>:

Number of Residents With Symptoms to be tested:            0

Number of Residents Without Symptoms to be tested:        0

I am pleased to report that the test results for all Residents noted in the April 10<sup>th</sup> bulletin have been returned and are negative for Covid-19.

Please note that should the continuing active screening of Residents indicate that a Resident has to be tested, the primary contact person(s) for that Resident will be contacted by the Home to advise them of the situation.

Due to the fact that we had 3 Residents on Spruce Lodge showing respiratory symptoms, the District Health Unit advised of a Respiratory Outbreak for Spruce Lodge only. The Home is following normal outbreak procedures until the all clear is received from the Health Unit.

### **Visitors**

Long Term Care Homes are closed to visitors. Essential visitors are permitted. These people include those visitors who are visiting a gravely ill Resident or those persons who are performing essential clinical health care services. All essential visitors are to be actively screened before entering the building, including temperature checks. If they do not pass the screening, then they are not allowed to enter. Essential visitors attending with gravely ill Residents are limited to one person at a time. All essential visitors are required to wear personal protective equipment while in the building.

### **Communications With Loved Ones**

Our Activation staff have been doing a great job helping Residents connect with their loved ones. We have I-phones available should you wish to call, facetime, text, or email with a Resident. Contact the Activation Department at 613-345-0255 ext 4118 to coordinate a family session.

There is also a new Facebook Group for St. Lawrence Lodge Residents. Let the Activation Department know that you wish to join, give them your email address and they will issue an invitation for you to join the Group.

A thank you is also extended to the Watson family for their kind donation of 2 I pads for Residents to use to connect with their loved ones. We appreciate having this technology available at this critical time!

We have received enquiries about sending cards and messages through regular mail. Yes, we can receive and distribute regular mail items. We have a quarantine protocol that we use in advance of forwarding the mail to the recipient. I'm sure the greeting cards will brighten someone's day!

### **Personal Protective Equipment Status**

We can report that the Home has been able to maintain reasonable levels of personal protective equipment so far. The following companies, individuals, and corporations have been instrumental in helping us to access necessary supplies:

Jeff Earle, Ground Master    The Town of Gananoque    Canadian Solar Farms  
Canarm    Tomlinson Construction    City of Brockville

Special thanks are extended to these Friends of St. Lawrence Lodge for their assistance.

### **New Guidance for Long Term Care Homes Received This Week**

All Long Term Care Homes received new Directives from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care this week. The newest Directives are highlighted below:

#### Temporary Pause on Transferring Hospital Patients to LTC Homes

The Ministry issued a memo to Hospitals to temporarily stop transferring patients to LTC Homes and Retirement Homes to protect their Residents. This guidance does not prevent hospitals from discharging designated Alternate Level of Care patients to appropriate, safe destinations.

#### Covid-19 Action Plan for LTC Homes

The Ministry issued a memo to health system providers launching an Action Plan to protect Long Term Care Homes. Through this plan, the Ontario Government is committing to support Homes to help stop the spread of Covid-19. The Plan includes:

Testing, Screening and Surveillance – Plan to expand testing for Residents and staff. Public Health Units plus paramedics and other health sector resources are being deployed to support additional testing. Public Health Units will conduct assessments of LTC Homes and develop plans for surveillance of Homes not in outbreak.

Managing Outbreaks – Public Health Units will assess risks for LTC Homes and determine those for priority focus for outbreak management

and other supports. Regional teams will be assembled to support individual Homes in infection prevention and control measures.

Growing our Heroic LTC Workforce – Providing emergency funding for infection prevention and control. Coordinate with Federal Government to determine how their top-up wage initiative can be used in Ontario to support LTC staff.

A copy of the plan is available at the Government of Ontario web site.

Single Site Order for LTC Employees

The Province issued a new order restricting LTC staff from working in more than one LTC Home, retirement home, or health care setting. LTC workers who must temporarily give up a job in another care setting as a result of this Order are protected from losing that job because they will be entitled to an unpaid leave of absence.

Again, I would like to thank the many family members who continue to send us messages of support and encouragement. Your words have a special meaning and are much appreciated by all.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Harrington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Harrington  
Administrator