

Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care Consideration for Designated Essential Caregiver

Caregiver

A caregiver is defined in the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, O. Reg 246/22 section(4)* as follows:

- a. is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,
- b. is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*,
- c. provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
- d. is designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and
- e. in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

Examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following:

- Supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating assistance.
- Assisting with mobility
- Assisting with personal hygiene
- Providing cognitive stimulation
- Fostering successful communication
- Providing meaningful connection and emotional support
- Offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making

Whether a caregiver is paid for services is **not** a condition in meeting the criteria of the definition of caregiver as set out above. An important role of the caregiver is that of providing meaningful connection and emotional support. A person should not be excluded from being designated as a caregiver if they are unable to provide direct physical support.

Designating an Essential Caregiver:

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is **the responsibility of the resident or their substitute decision-maker**, not the home. The designation of a caregiver should be made in writing to the home.

- Essential Caregivers must be designated and must be at least 16 years of age.
- If there is a request to designate an individual as a caregiver under the age of 16, approval from a parent or legal guardian is required.
- A maximum of four essential caregivers may be designated per resident at a time. (Note: caregivers who were designated prior to December 15th, 2021, may continue to be designated as a caregiver even if this means the resident has more than four designated essential caregivers.)
- Only **one essential caregiver** may visit a resident who is isolating or in situations where the home or area of the home is in outbreak.

Note: In the case where Public Health Ontario, Middlesex-London Health Unit or St. Joseph's Infection Control directs the home in respect to the number of visitors allowed, the home is to follow this direction.

A resident and/or their substitute decision-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 a designated essential caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.
- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may not continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the home.
- Only **one essential caregiver** may visit a resident who is isolating or in situations where the home or area of the home is in outbreak.
- Homes should have a procedure for documenting essential caregiver designations.
- All required education and Infection Prevention and Control education is required to maintain essential caregiver status.

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Essential Caregivers – scheduling and length and frequency of visits

Homes may not require scheduling or restrict the length or frequency of visits by essential caregivers. However, in the case where a resident resides in an area of the home in outbreak, is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one essential caregiver may visit at a time.

Essential Caregiver Restrictions

An essential caregiver may not visit any other resident or home for 10 days after visiting:

- an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptom

Outbreak Clarification

Recognizing there are essential caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident, in the event of an outbreak, essential caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Essential caregivers may support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.

COVID-19 Asymptomatic Screen Testing

The objective is to ensure residents have access to the support of their family as part of the care team. Essential caregivers typically support activities of daily living such as feeding, personal hygiene, and/or emotional needs, such as anxiety, one-on-one behavioural support, etc. Essential caregivers must pass active screening and adhere to the home's testing requirements.

All essential caregivers visiting the home must be tested for COVID-19 according to one of the following:

- An antigen test at least two times per week, on separate days, if the essential caregiver is up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses;
- An antigen test at least three times per week, on separate days, if the essential caregiver is not up-to-date with recommended COVID-19 doses;
- One PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and one antigen test per week, at a minimum, on separate days.

*Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care requires all **essential caregivers** to be rapid tested three times weekly.*

***General visitors** will be required to be tested every other day.*

Where an essential caregiver takes an antigen test at the home, the test must be taken before granting them full entry; however, they may proceed to the resident's room, with appropriate PPE and following IPAC practices while waiting for the test result. They must not enter any shared spaces (e.g. dining room, activity room) until a negative test result is received.

General visitors must wait until a negative test result is obtained before gaining entry into the home.

Please note: If a vaccinated essential caregiver is returning to the home after being away for 10 days as a result of a high-risk exposure, essential caregivers will be required to wait 15 minutes to ensure a negative result is obtained on your first visit back to the home.

Please note: At this time, all essential caregivers are required to be rapid tested three times per week.

Undisclosed Vaccination Status

All individuals who do not disclose their vaccination status will be considered unvaccinated and cannot gain entry to the home.

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COVID-19 Immunization Requirements

Staying up-to-Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses

Protection after a primary COVID-19 vaccine series decreases over time, especially against the Omicron variant of concern. COVID-19 vaccine booster doses help to increase protection against symptomatic infection and severe outcomes at the individual level and helps to reduce transmission at the population level.

What is considered to be up to date for COVID-19 vaccines will likely need to be modified over time based on availability of new vaccines in the future, potential changes in disease epidemiology and as new evidence on additional booster doses becomes available.

Staying up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines means a person ***has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.***

All designated essential caregivers to Mount Hope must have three doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

All general visitors must have had at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Mount Hope Centre for Long-Term Care will continue to evaluate, monitor and adjust measures in place based on ministry direction and consultation with our local public health unit.

Notwithstanding that an individual is vaccinated, they are still required to adhere to applicable testing and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements established by Mount Hope Centre for Long Ter Care, even after testing and precautions are no longer mandated by applicable ministry and public health authorities.

Undisclosed Vaccination Status or Unvaccinated or Caregivers

All individuals who do not disclose their vaccination status or are unvaccinated essential caregivers who enter Mount Hope will undergo daily rapid antigen testing.

Acceptable Proof of Vaccination:

The provincial enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code is considered valid proof of vaccination. Any individuals who have received their vaccination out of the province of Ontario should contact their local public health to obtain proper documentation.

Failure to submit a copy or show proof of vaccination cannot be considered immunized.

All personal health information will be managed in accordance with privacy requirements.

Emergency, Very Ill, Palliative Visitors

If an essential caregiver is entering the home to visit with a resident who is very ill or is palliative, they will not be subject to testing in the event of an emergency. If not an emergency, palliative visitors will be required to participate in Rapid Antigen Testing to reduce the risk to the Home.

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Expectations of the Essential Caregiver

- Must be identified by the resident and/ or SDM and essential caregiver designation should be submitted in writing to the home.
- Must be willing to participate in training and provide the care requested.
- Essential caregivers must be physically, cognitively, emotionally able to provide care elements identified.
- Follow established infection control measures including continuously wearing the provided personal protective equipment (PPE), performing hand hygiene as directed, practicing safe physical distancing from other residents and staff, and respiratory etiquette (coughing and sneezing safely).
- Prior to designation as an essential caregiver, it will be mandatory for all essential caregivers to complete educational training on the following:
 - Infection Control practices, physical distancing, PPE use, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, etc.
 - Read, understand and agree to the Essential Caregiver Program Guidelines.
- Stay home if they are feeling unwell, have COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to someone who has COVID-19 and inform the resident's care team immediately if symptoms develop during or following a visit.
- Essential Caregivers will be actively screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, prior to every entry into the home. Essential Caregivers with signs or symptoms of illness or who fail the screening will not be permitted into the home.
- Essential caregivers must wear a medical mask, provided by the home, for the entire duration of their indoor visit.
- Masking is no longer required when outdoors for staff, residents, students, volunteers, or visitors, but remains encouraged as an added layer of protection against COVID-19.
- Vaccinated essential caregivers may accompany a resident to the dining room to provide assistance with feeding.
- Vaccinated essential caregivers are able to spend time with residents in areas outside of the resident's room including lounges, walks in hallways, and outdoor gardens and patios.
- Essential caregivers and general visitors can share meals and beverage with their loved ones during an outdoor visit.
- **Caregivers/ general visitors are prohibited at this time from eating or drinking indoors as per Ministry directives.** This includes while waiting for rapid test results.
- Essential caregivers are encouraged to take their loved one outside on the grounds or surrounding neighbourhood for a walk.
- All essential caregivers and visitors, regardless of their vaccination status must keep their mask on at all times and cannot eat or drink in the presence of resident and others while in the home. Children 2 and under are not required to wear a mask.
- Physical distancing with the resident is not required but essential caregivers must wear a mask at all times while indoors, including in the resident room.
- Essential caregivers will only provide care to their loved one and care shall be provided according to the care plan for the resident.
- Essential caregivers will be required to review and sign off after reviewing the "**Essential Caregiver COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements**". This document identifies the training that has been provided and that the caregiver will adhere to all standards outlined.
- Violations of any of the above expectations may result in cancellation of the caregiver's privileges within the home.

Becoming a designated Essential Caregiver

If you wish to become a designated essential caregiver, please call or email Morgan Hoffarth, Director of Care at mhoffarth@sjhc.london.on.ca or by calling Ext. 65287 to obtain the educational materials required and submit proof of vaccination. Once the education materials have been reviewed, the intake and approval process will be completed and the essential caregiver, as requested by the resident and/or substitute decision maker, will be added if caregiver requirements are met.

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Attestation

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the home's visitor policy and have reviewed the Essential Caregiver COVID-19 guidelines and education requirements, including information/training on hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, how to reduce risk of COVID-19 and physical distancing guidelines.

I understand that the essential caregiver will:

- Fully disclose all pertinent information asked on the COVID-19 screening tool, and not attend the Home if feeling any symptoms, no matter how mild.
- Participate in rapid antigen testing or be able to show proof that you have participated in rapid antigen testing that day or previous day. This would mean regular, ongoing testing for frequent visitors. Testing routine is subject to change.
- A resident may see four visitors at a time, in any combination of essential caregivers or general visitors for indoor visits.
- Complete education on COVID-related material provided by the Home which includes donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), physical distancing measures and how to perform proper Hand Hygiene.
- Follow Public Health's and the home's direction during an outbreak
- Comply with the Home's Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) protocols
- Wear a medical grade face mask provide by Mount Hope for the entire visit, and a face shield or safety goggles as required by the Home
- Read the home's Visitor Policy prior to visiting resident for the first time
- I understand if I have any questions or require clarification I will seek out a member of the leadership team to discuss.

I, POA/SDM _____ understand that non-adherence to the above requirements will result in the discontinuation of the essential visits.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I, Essential Caregiver _____ understand that non-adherence to the above requirements will result in the discontinuation of the essential visits.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Resident Name: _____ Date: _____

Floor/ Room #: _____

Essential Caregiver(s) Name: _____

Essential Caregiver Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Caregiver Name(s) Submitted in Writing: YES _____ NO _____

Care Service:

- Direct Care (assisting with eating, bathing, exercise, etc.) - Specify below
- Emotional Support - Specify below
- Cognitive Stimulation - Specify below
- Other (please specify): _____

How often do you expect to be in the home each week (i.e. daily, twice a week)? _____

Please provide additional information below detailing reason for request for consideration for the Essential Caregiver Program:

Request Reviewed By: _____

Request Approved Request Denied

Reason: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Family/Caregiver Notified of Response Progress Note added to PCC

Essential Caregiver Name added to tracking sheet