



March 16, 2020

## **UPDATE TO ALL FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

Thank you for your ongoing support as we all deal with the constant and ongoing changes related to COVID-19. We know that this is a very challenging time for everyone, and we are actively trying to ensure that our communication is ongoing.

We know that family, friends, private caregivers and volunteers provide care and services to residents, which unfortunately cannot happen at this time, so we are attempting to schedule additional staff beyond our usual number. We will do our very best based upon availability. We will also reassign staff within the building based upon resident needs. Although we cannot provide the level of love and care that you provide your loved one, we will do our very best!

There have been questions regarding how we are checking the staff entering the building. Anyone entering the building are screened at the main entrance for any symptoms and for travel history. Anyone with symptoms or travel history based upon the public health criteria is excluded from entering the building. Public health is providing us with the guidelines for restricting people with symptoms and travel history and we are following this guidance.

In addition, there are some service providers who are continuing to provide services within the building; the laboratory service, Dynacare; our oxygen provider, Medigas: Mobile x-ray (WMMI); Physiotherapy and Pharmacy services continue. All of these providers are also screened at the front door.

We are evaluating other providers on a case by case basis. At this time the foot care nurse will not be here, and Multigen (Dental and Optometry) has informed us that their services are suspended.

In order to facilitate delivery of items to a resident here, a rack has been set up between the two entrance doors for families to drop off packages. Please put clearly labelled packages on the rack and we will ensure that they are delivered. We know that these special packages make a real difference to residents.

We are working out a process for the families who would like to continue to do laundry for a resident. This will be communicated soon as we want to ensure we are following appropriate infection control procedures.

We are also attaching a message received today from the Family Councils Ontario and the Ontario Association of Resident Councils: **COVID19: A Joint Statement from Family Councils Ontario and Ontario Association of Residents' Councils**. We thank these organizations for their support of long-term care in Ontario as all of us work towards providing the best care during a challenging time.

Lastly, in order to facilitate communication with a resident who has their own telephone you can call directly as opposed through our reception. This may be more convenient for you. The instructions to reach residents directly is also attached to this update.

Lastly, please keep well yourself. We know that many family and friends are in the higher risk category for COVID-19 and we care about you too.

Janet Morris  
President & CEO

## **COVID19: A Joint Statement from Family Councils Ontario and Ontario Association of Residents' Councils**

Dear Residents and Families,

Late last Friday, Chief Medical Officer of Health David Williams sent out a memo to long-term care homes strongly recommending that homes only allow “essential” visitors until further notice. Essential visitors are defined as those who have a resident who is dying or very ill.

This means that, effective immediately, only essential visitors will be permitted to enter a long-term care home -- and only if they successfully pass the screening. No other visitors will be permitted to enter the long-term care home.

We understand that this decision is hard on you. Visitors are essential to resident quality of life and assure families that all is well in their loved one's home. Please understand that this decision was not taken lightly. It has been taken to ensure the health and safety of the residents entrusted to the care of long-term care homes, their families, and the staff members who are working hard during this time to keep residents safe and well. As the organizations that work to represent the voices of residents and families, OARC and FCO were consulted on this decision and support it. It is necessary in order to keep our residents and families safe.

Residents' health and safety is paramount. To live in a healthy manner, opportunities for social engagement, joyful interaction, peer and family support, and meaningful activities are important. We recognize that restricting opportunities for such interactions will impact residents in significant ways, opening the door for loneliness, sadness and isolation. Your visitors/families are valued contributors to the daily rhythm and life lived in your home.

We also know that many families visit daily not only for social visits, but also to take care of their loved one and provide valuable assistance at mealtimes. Not being able to see and care for your resident must be one of the most heartbreaking aspects of the pandemic. But, it is a pandemic and we need to take precautions to avoid further spread of the virus. Restricting visitors to long-term care homes is one of those precautions.

The evidence gathered so far tells us that older adults and those with underlying health issues are at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (source: <https://link.spamstopshere.net/u/5cea3ee5/FIBwUqpn6hGPs1CuYFsSiw?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fhigh-risk-complications.html>). This means that residents are at higher risk of severe illness or death. During this difficult time, please keep this in mind and remember that measures such as visitor restrictions are being implemented to save lives.

We are living through an unprecedented time. During this time, please know that we understand and empathize with what you're going through.

To residents, we ask that you take care of yourselves and your fellow residents when you can, and try to exercise patience with those who are around you, seizing opportunities for laughter and peace.

To families, we recognize your pain and stress from being far away from your loved ones. We ask that you be patient and understand that the visitor restriction is being done to keep your loved ones safe.

To team members/staff, we can't be with you in person but we see the hard work that you are doing to keep residents safe, healthy, and engaged. Thank you.

This is a crisis. The Ontario government and long-term care homes are doing the best they can in this difficult situation. Our goal must be to reduce the possibility of COVID-19 infections in long-term care and to keep our residents safe.

We're all in this together and we'll get through it together.

With love,

Samantha Peck  
Executive Director  
Family Councils Ontario



Family Councils Ontario

Dee Lender  
Executive Director  
Ontario Association of Residents'  
Councils





**To : Residents, Families and Friends**

**RE : RESIDENT ROOM EXTENSIONS**

**When possible, residents, families and friends are encouraged to call the direct line for residents which are 613-731-8380 or 613-731-0094.**

Resident extension numbers always start with an 8, followed by the room number and then the number which indicates either a private or basic room. Private rooms are indicated by the number 0, while a basic room is indicated by the number 1 or 2 depending on the bed assignment.

**EXAMPLES:**

If your family member is in a private room #123, their telephone extension would be 81230.

If your family member is in a basic room #124, bed A, the telephone extension is 81241.

If your family member is in a basic room # 124, bed B, the telephone extension is 81242.