



Family Councils Ontario

URGENT COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 Update:

Visitors Now Restricted in Long-Term Care

Dear Family Council members, long-term care home staff, and sector stakeholders,

Late last night, 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. The Ministry of Health will reevaluate this measure in the coming weeks and ensure consistency with the Chief Medical Officer of Health's guidance on enhanced public health measures.

[You can read the memo here.](#)

We know this decision will sadden and perhaps frustrate many of you as spending time with your loved one is looked forward to by residents and families alike. Visits bring joy, connection, and improvements to quality of life. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, safety and well-being of Ontario's residents must be top priority.

FCO was consulted on the visiting restriction and supports the decision to restrict non-essential visitors. Please be assured that the Ministry of Health and Chief Medical Officer did not take this decision lightly.

As for Family Council meetings, we ask that you suspend all in-person Council meetings until the restriction on visitors has been lifted. Council members must not enter the home unless they qualify as essential visitors and pass the screening.

If you wish to continue connecting with your fellow Council members, use tools such as email, web meeting platforms such as [Zoom](#) or [Google Hangouts](#), or phone. If you choose to forego all Council meetings and work, please rest assured that doing so is appropriate and reasonable in this situation.

We know this is a difficult and unprecedented time. Out of love and concern for our homes' residents, compassion for home staff who are working tirelessly to keep residents healthy, and respect for the Ministry and Public Health officials who are working around the clock to monitor and respond to the COVID-19 situation, we ask that you adhere to the visiting restriction and be patient and kind as the situation unfolds. We are all in this together and will get through it together.

Please stay safe, practice self-care, and act with love and kindness towards each other.

We will continue to update you as the COVID-19 situation progresses.

Sincerely,

Samantha Peck

Executive Director, Family Councils Ontario