
St. Lawrence Lodge COVID-19 Bulletin

Issue Date: **May 1, 2020**

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.

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.

Covid-19 News

Testing Guidance from the Province

- On April 9th, 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.
 - Potential atypical symptoms should also be considered.
- 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 May 1st:

Number of Residents With Symptoms to be tested:	1	Elm Lodge
	1	Spruce Lodge

Number of Residents Without Symptoms to be tested:	1	Spruce Lodge
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I am pleased to report that the test results for all Residents noted in the April 24th bulletin have been returned and are negative for Covid-19.

However, we currently have a suspect outbreak situation remaining on Elm Lodge and Spruce Lodge pending the outcome of testing.

Mothers’ Day Recognition Reminder

Mother’s’ Day is always a huge day of recognition for the many Mothers living at the Lodge. Many people have been asking about what to do to honour their loved one this year. With the current restrictions on the flow of goods into the Home, we are advising resident families to please not send flowers this year.

However, we do not want this important day of recognition to go by without a proper acknowledgment and celebration. So, we are planning to provide a small floral gift for our female residents with financial support coming from the SLL Foundation. Each resident will receive a flower and vase arrangement. The gift will be delivered to the Home a few days in advance of Mother’s Day. The items will be cleaned and then quarantined prior to delivery on the Sunday. We trust that our families will be accepting of this initiative given the current situation.

We encourage anyone planning on sending Mother’s Day cards to please do so well in advance so that we can quarantine the mail in advance of delivery. We know that these important greeting cards and expressions of love will brighten a special person’s day.

We also want you to know that most of the members of our Activation Department staff members will be on duty that day to celebrate Mother’s Day with our residents. They will be having special features to recognize the importance of this annual celebration for our Mothers.

Window Visiting With Residents

You may be aware of recent media coverage regarding the City of Ottawa LTC Homes banning window visiting with residents residing near ground level. Apparently, this is becoming a more prominent practice right across the Province, despite visiting restrictions. It was especially concerning that people were making physical contact through the window.

Person-to-person transmission of Covid-19 remains a huge concern, especially with potential exposure to our vulnerable long term care residents.

Consequently, Dr. Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, recommends that if window visits take place residents should be asked to keep windows closed and social distancing must be maintained by visitors at all times.

We continue to request that people stay at Home rather than attend at the Lodge. Please maintain distance, at least for a few more weeks, so we can continue to protect our Residents and get through this pandemic safely and unscathed.

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.

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:

Public Health Checklist for LTC and Retirement Homes

Public Health Ontario has drafted a checklist for LTC and retirement homes to help prepare for, identify, and manage a resident with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

This checklist goes over requirements related to the following areas:

entrances, essential workers, personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene, universal masking, physical distancing, surveillance and outbreak management, new resident admissions, declaring the outbreak over, and environmental cleaning.

It is important to note that this outbreak checklist is to be used in addition to and does not replace the Ministry of Health Control of Respiratory Infection Outbreaks in LTC Homes.

New Screening Tool for LTC Homes and Retirement Homes

The MOH released a new version of their COVID-19 Screening Tool for LTC Homes and Retirement Homes.

This version contains five screening questions, as well as, the criteria that determine whether the individual passes the screening process or not. The tool mentions that at a minimum, these five questions should be used to screen individuals for COVID-19 and can be adapted based on need and the specific setting.

Resident Testing Update

The Province mandated enhanced proactive testing for residents and employees in all long term care Homes. The testing is to be coordinated by the Regional Health Units. This work is getting underway across the Province.

The exact schedule for testing at St. Lawrence Lodge is not known at this time. We have been informed that the Ministry is establishing targets for Health Units to complete the testing across the Province in the next two weeks. The Ministry will work with the Health Units to ensure they have the necessary supports to complete the work in a timely manner. Further updates on the Lodge's testing status will be provided once the Health Unit confirms the testing schedule for our Home.

LTC Staff Eligible for Pandemic Pay

The Ministry announced pandemic pay for most health care workers this week. To recap, this increase will provide \$4 an hour per hour worked on top of existing hourly wages, regardless of the qualified employees hourly wage. In addition, employees working over 100 hours per month will receive lump sum payments of \$250 per month for each of the next four months. This pay will be effective for 16 weeks from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.

We are awaiting details in writing on when this funding will begin to flow.

Eligible workplaces include long term care, licensed retirement homes, home and community care, acute care hospitals and a variety of congregate care "social service" settings including group homes and shelters, as well as hotels/motels use for self-isolation and/or shelter overflow.

This funding is available in all homes regardless of whether they have experienced a Covid-19 outbreak or not.

Eligible staff are limited to front line non-managerial staff including: PSWs, RNs, RPNs, NPs and auxiliary staff including cooks, housekeeping and other key workers.

Communications With Loved Ones

Our Activation staff continue to do 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 private 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.

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 a special someone's day!

Thank You

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 fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Harrington
Administrator