



# Committee Report

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| <b>To:</b>                     | Chair and Members of the Long Term Care Committee of Management |
| <b>Committee Date:</b>         | January 18, 2022                                                |
| <b>Subject / Report No:</b>    | LTCR-CM-02-22                                                   |
| <b>Title:</b>                  | LTC COVID-19 Update                                             |
| <b>Prepared by:</b>            | Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long Term Care                    |
| <b>Reviewed by:</b>            | Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer                      |
| <b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b> |                                                                 |

## Recommendation

1. That report LTCR-CM-02-22 regarding a Long-Term Care COVID-19 Status Update be received for information.

## Executive Summary

All three Grey County LTC homes are in active COVID-19 outbreak. We started the new year with continued vigilance and subsequently escalated to full outbreak measures to ensure the safety of our residents, families, and team members. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and January 4<sup>th</sup> the Associate Deputy Minister of Long Term Care released updates that outlined temporary [enhanced measures](#) due to the increased in COVID-19 cases as a result of the new variant (Omicron). The new measures affected vaccinations, surveillance testing, visiting, leaves of absences, resident activities, IPAC measures and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> dose vaccinations. Our homes quickly implemented all new strategies that came in effect December 15-17<sup>th</sup>. A virtual family meeting was held on December 20<sup>th</sup> and January 6<sup>th</sup> to provide clarification and answer any questions related to the new guidelines. Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures continue to be in place, PPE supplies are monitored to ensure an 8-week supply is maintained.

## Updates

### Outbreaks

On December 22<sup>nd</sup> a COVID-19 Outbreak was declared at Rockwood Terrace. The outbreak initially affected 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, but on December 24<sup>th</sup> Public Health declared a home

wide outbreak. The outbreak to date has affected 14 residents and 8 staff, and I am saddened to report that 1 resident death did occur. As of January 10<sup>th</sup>, there are 1 active resident case on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and 2 active staff cases. All team members worked quickly to implement enhanced IPAC measures and worked closely with Public Health to contain the spread. Health status reports were provided daily to families of covid positive residents and general updates were provided daily to the community through MailChimp and family/Designated Care Partner (DCP) email contacts. All general visits and leaves were suspended at the home. On December 24<sup>th</sup> protective measures were also implemented at Grey Gables and Lee Manor which included suspending general Visits (indoor and outdoor) and resident outings.

On December 27<sup>th</sup>, a respiratory outbreak that was identified as “Seasonal Coronavirus” (agent that causes the common cold and respiratory tract infections) was declared on 2 South at Lee Manor. The outbreak was contained to 2 South and to date has affected 11 residents and 4 staff. Through ongoing surveillance testing, we did experience positive test results for staff that had worked on 2 South and 3 South. As a precaution all residents on 2 South and 3 South along with any identified staff were PCR tested immediately. Daily communications to residents, families and staff were provided. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, a COVID-19 outbreak was declared on 3 South. Confirmed positive cases for 5 staff and 1 resident on 3 South. In room meal service was implemented for all residents on 3 South. All staff on 3 South are wearing N95 masks. Communications were immediately sent to families, residents, staff.

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, Public Health declared a suspect COVID-19 outbreak on Grey Gables’ Maple Lane home area affecting 1 resident and 5 staff. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, we received confirmation that 4 staff members had tested positive, and a home wide COVID-19 outbreak was declared. There are no resident cases as of January 9<sup>th</sup>, Residents are cohorted to their home areas. All residents and staff were PCR tested and staff transitioned to N95 masks. Communications were immediately sent to families, residents, staff.

Enhanced IPAC measures were implemented at all three homes, daily outbreak management meetings were held with Public Health. IPAC audits were conducted daily, and additional supports were utilized. Leadership teams activated their 7 day a week rotation to provide daily support. EMS staff and H & S Manager, Kerri Meier assisted with onsite mask fit testing. Rockwood Terrace staffing levels were critical over the Christmas holidays, and leaders, retired staff along with EMS supported the home. Designated Care Partners also played a crucial role during the outbreaks, many DCPs arranged their visits to align with mealtimes and some also provided hands on assistance with personal care.

## Vaccination

As of December 13<sup>th</sup>, all team members, support workers, students and volunteers are fully vaccinated. The mandatory vaccination directive did result in the termination of 3% of our team members among the three homes.

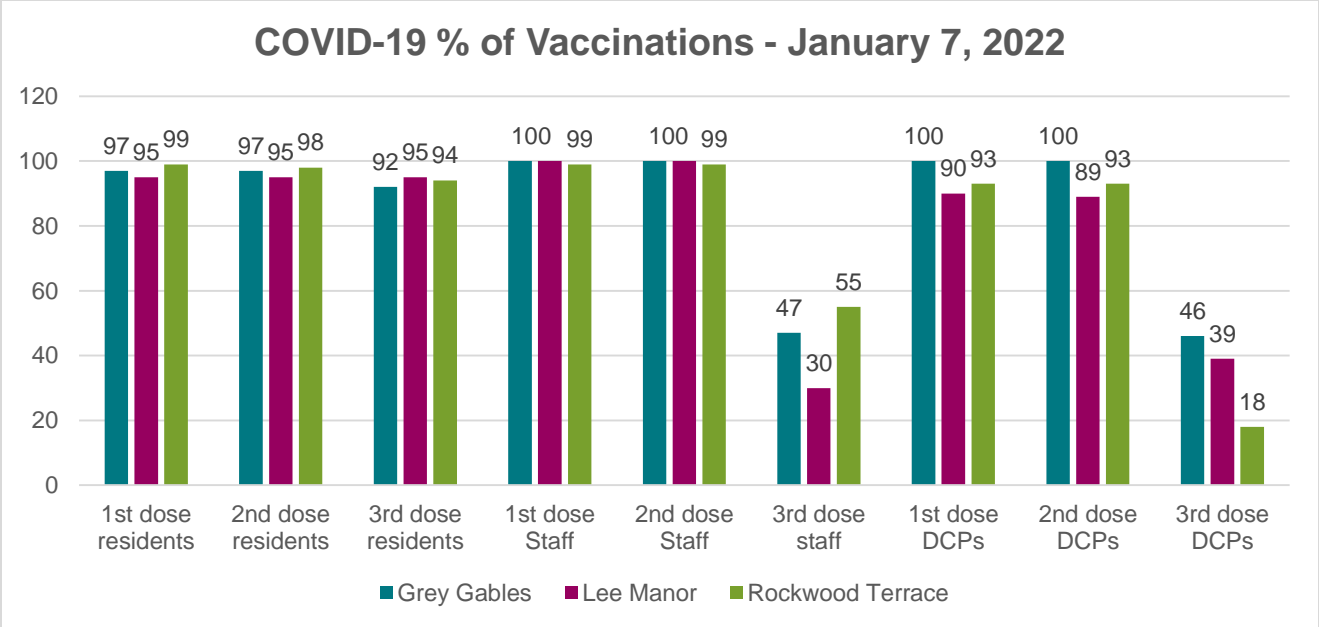
Third dose booster clinics were held in November and December for team members and Designated Care Partners. Effective December 16, 2021 the Ministry of Health COVID Vaccine Third Dose Recommendation was updated to shorten the waiting period between second and third dose. Individuals 18+ are now eligible for a booster dose 84 days (3 months) after their second dose. Our clinical teams continue to work with staff and DCPs to accommodate easy access of vaccine.

On December 31<sup>st</sup>, it was announced that the 4<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 vaccination dose would be available for residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, and older adults living in other congregate settings, (eligibility: least three months have passed since their third dose). Administration of 4<sup>th</sup> dose vaccinations for all eligible and consenting residents is being scheduled for the coming weeks. Due to the current outbreak status it is advised by Public Health to hold 4<sup>th</sup> dose vaccinations for residents currently living in outbreak home areas until the outbreaks are declared over.

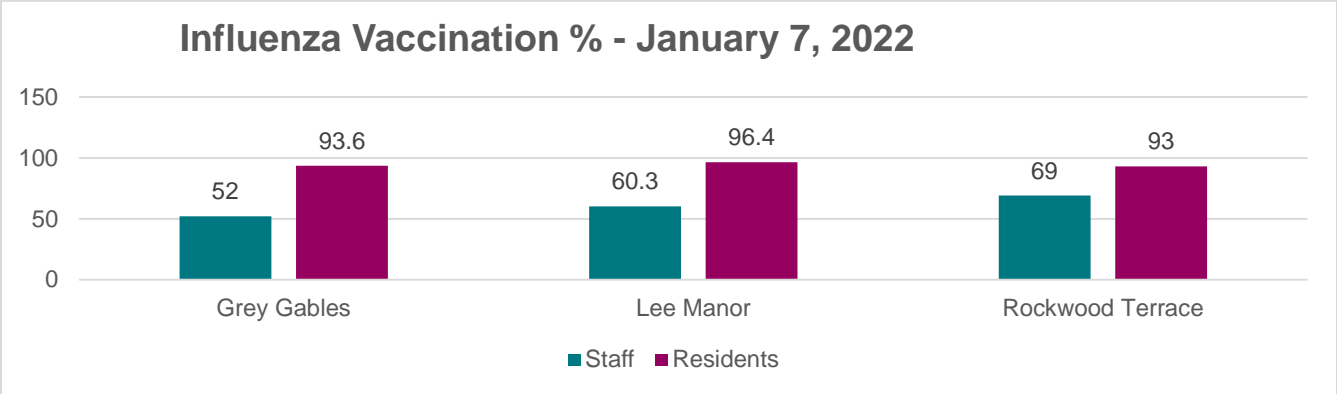
It was also announced that the third dose would be mandatory for all staff, students, volunteers, support workers, caregivers.

- As such, all staff, students, volunteers, support workers, and caregivers who are eligible (i.e., 3 months after receiving the 2nd dose) will be required to show proof of their third dose to come into or work within the home, unless they have a valid medical exemption.
- Effective dates are as follows:
- Staff, students, volunteers, support workers and caregivers:
  - Those who are eligible on or before December 31st must provide proof of having received a third dose by January 28, 2022.
  - The remainder of staff, students, volunteers, and support workers will have until March 14, 2022 to show proof of their third dose, recognizing the deadline to be fully vaccinated was December 13, 2021.
- The clinical teams organized vaccination clinics and accommodated individuals that could not attend clinics.

Our current COVID vaccination rates are:



Influenza vaccination clinics were held throughout the months of October and November. Our current influenza immunization rates for residents and staff are:



Surveillance Testing

Prior to December 15<sup>th</sup> the care communities’ surveillance testing teams continued to test partially and non-immunized individuals 2-3 times a week and we are testing a combined average of 150 rapid antigen tests weekly. As part of proactive measures, effective Dec.15<sup>th</sup> all three homes notified staff that our random testing would be increased to 3x a week due to the new COVID-19 variant (Omicron). Self-swabbing training was also provided to staff to allow them the opportunity to self-test, this would also improve the efficiency and flow in the swabbing clinic.

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the updated guidance document outlined that all persons entering the home must undergo surveillance testing. All fully vaccinated staff, students, volunteers, caregivers, 2x min per week. Visitors and support workers require negative test upon entry regardless of vaccination status, unless have negative test from previous day. All three homes implemented

testing every other day as part of enhanced measures for everyone. Our surveillance teams are now testing an average of 1,500+ tests weekly.

### Visiting & Leaves of Absences

As of December 15<sup>th</sup>, everyone entering a long term care home must be fully vaccinated with the exception for visiting a resident receiving end of life care or providing proof of valid medication exemption. Indoor visiting is now maximum of 2 people per resident visit. Children aged 1-5 are not permitted to visit indoors as they are not eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination. Infants under 1 year are not considered visitors, and no testing or immunization required.

Visitors may book an outdoor visit regardless of immunization status but must undergo active screening and testing, there is now a maximum of 4 people per resident visit. Children aged 1-5 may visit outdoors but must undergo screening and testing.

As of December 17<sup>th</sup>, social day absences are permitted for fully vaccinated residents only. Upon their return they must undergo rapid and PCR testing on day 3 and PCR on day 7. Overnight absences are suspended but if a resident chooses to leave, they will be temporarily discharged, resulting in the loss of their bed.

Enhanced symptom screening twice daily for 10 days has been implemented for all returns, admissions, and transfers. Residents will be isolated and tested per Ministry guidelines.

On December 28<sup>th</sup>, we received a memo outlining additional enhanced measures for long term care homes related to general visiting effective December 30, 2021.

- Access to long-term care homes by general visitors will be paused, including for outdoor visits. General visitors will continue to be permitted to enter the home to visit residents receiving end of life care.
- Day absences for all residents for social purposes will be paused. All essential, medical, or compassionate absences will continue to be permitted.

These latest updates were implemented in our three homes on December 24 and 26<sup>th</sup> as a proactive measure to keep our residents and staff safe.

### IPAC Strategies

Infection Prevention & Control Audits are completed monthly, but were increased due to the number of cases in the province and the Omicron variant concern. As per the December 14<sup>th</sup> directive all homes must conduct Public Health IPAC audits every other week.

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, received an update for N95 use. Directive #5 was updated to include an interim precaution due to the uncertainty around the mechanisms of transmission of the COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern, required precautions for all health care workers providing direct care to or interacting with a suspected, probable (i.e. placed in precautions as high risk contact, in an outbreak zone of the facility or recently transferred from a facility in outbreak) or confirmed cases of COVID-19 are a fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirator (or approved equivalent), eye protection (goggles or face shield), gown and gloves.

All three locations have modified break and lunchrooms to ensure physical distancing. Resident activities have returned to cohorts of 10 people or less and large group social gatherings have been suspended.

### Designated Care Partner Program

Annual Resident and Family Experience Surveys were released in November. The Summary report was provided to each home on December 20<sup>th</sup>, and we will provide further information as a later date.

Our Designated Care Partner program has been selected to be part of Advantage Ontario's Annual Convention in April 2022. We look forward to sharing our tools, resources and lessons learned with other long term care homes.

As of December 15<sup>th</sup>, all new DCPs must be fully vaccinated. Residents may designate up to 2 DCPs. Current unvaccinated DCPs have until February 21<sup>st</sup> to be fully immunized, until proof is provided, they are directed to visit only in resident's room and have a rapid test prior to each visit.

As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, eligible DCPs must provide proof of 3<sup>rd</sup> dose by January 28<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of caregivers will have until May 23, 2022 to show proof of their third dose, recognizing caregivers were recently provided until February 21, 2022 to become fully vaccinated if they were not already.

### Staffing

With the increase numbers of COVID cases associated with schools, some staff were required to self-isolate due to their children being exposed or ill. All three locations had contingency plans in place and leadership teams were on standby if we were faced with a staffing shortage. Many of our staff that were on education leave returned to work over the holidays which helped balance strained staffing levels.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, a memo was received from the Associate Deputy Minister outlining additional supports for homes including vaccination, surveillance testing and supplies, and a new Test to Work policy outlined in the guidance document. Grey County Long Term Care will only be using the seven-day time frame in an emergency situation and with support of Grey Bruce Public Health.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 the Ministry announced that the "limiting work to a single long term care order" that restricts fully vaccinated staff from only working in one location when a home is in outbreak would be removed. In these circumstances, if a staff is critically required to work in another facility while working in an outbreak facility, this should be done in consultation with the public health unit. It is advised that the staff member who works in the outbreak unit in one home and/or health care facility also work in an outbreak area of at the second work location. The staff member must be actively screened every day and be rapid antigen tested every day, the same as those under test-to-work who have an ongoing exposure in an outbreak.

### Funding

The PSW wage enhancement extension was set to expire on October 31<sup>st</sup>. On October 28<sup>th</sup> the Ontario government announced that it will extend the temporary wage enhancement for

personal support workers and direct support workers until March 31, 2022. This funding provides \$3 per hour for approximately 50,000 eligible personal support workers in long-term care. Direct funding allocations are flowed to homes on a regular basis.

## Partnerships

Work continues with partnerships at both regional and local levels. The Grey Bruce Long Term Care Committee and healthcare partners are meeting weekly for the next 6-8 weeks. The long-term care homes attend the Public Health led meetings every two weeks. The Southwest Pandemic Response Table and the Regional Long Term Care Committee have increased their frequency of meetings. Collaborations are ongoing with our healthcare partners to discuss options for a local response team.

We continue to be thankful for the support from Council, the CAO, Senior Management team and the staff in all departments, we recognize that we are in this together as we Colour It for our residents, families, staff, and communities.

## Appendices and Attachments

- [AsDM Memo 2021.12.14](#)
- [Summary of Enhanced Measures](#)
- [AsDM Memo – Pandemic Response updates 2021.12.23](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance Document 2021.12.23](#)
- [AsDM Memo: Additional Measures 2021.12.28](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTC Homes 2021.12.28](#)
- [Associate Deputy Minister Memo 2021.12.30](#)
- [Summary of Enhanced Measures](#)
- [Minister's Directive on LTC Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy \(EN\)](#)
- [AsDM Memo LTC Pandemic Response Update 01.04.22](#)
- [LTC COVID-19 Guidance Document](#)
- [ADM Letter PSW Temporary Wage Enhancement Extension](#)
- [Virtual Family Meeting December 20 2021](#)
- [Virtual Family Meeting January 6 2022](#)