

To:	Chair and Members of the Committee of Management
Committee Date:	May 11, 2021
Subject / Report No:	LTCR-CM-09-21
Title:	LTC COVID 19 Update
Prepared by:	Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long-Term Care
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Adopted as Presented by Committee of Management CM16-21; Endorsed by County Council CC46-21

Recommendation

1. That report **LTCR-CM-09-21** regarding a **Long-Term Care COVID-19 Status Update** be received for information.

Executive Summary

Over the past two months, residents, team members and Designated Care Partners (DCP) who consented have been vaccinated, additional IPAC measures have been introduced, surveillance testing increased, and our three care communities remain vigilant and strong. On April 3rd, the province entered an emergency brake and all three locations restricted their indoor and outdoor visiting. On April 7th, the province entered a stay at home order and our window visits were suspended on April 15th to support Public Health's 48 hour stay at home. The clinical leads reassessed the situation and window visits were reactivated on April 26th to allow 2 visitors from the same household.

Updates

New Directive

On March 15, 2021, the Ministry released an updated [Directive](#) related to rapid antigen testing frequency and accessing long term care homes. Rapid antigen testing frequency was outlined based on the regional public health colour zones. Our area was in the green (prevent) zone, it was noted that testing was only required 1-2 times. It was decided to continue with status quo and continue to test 3x a week. This decision was

based on the new variants of concern and a recently published analysis by leading experts' stating "Settings providing an essential service or manufacturing role, including schools, where direct close contact cannot be avoided, should be considered for such programs. Testing 2–3 times per week is suggested for optimal public health impact."²⁰ This decision will be reviewed after staff receive their second vaccine dose and current cases in the community. An exception to the testing frequency includes Staff, Designated Care Partners (DCP), Students, volunteers who only enter the home 2 x in a 7-day period are now only required to be tested once in that time period.

The Northern Exemption rule was also updated which stated that homes were no longer required to apply to the MOLTC for this exception; all three care communities declined this option and continue to conduct rapid testing 3x in a 7-day period.

General visits for indoor and outdoor stations were reopened on March 19th, based on the new directive visitors are required to complete active screening and rapid antigen testing.

On April 7th [Directive #3](#) was updated to reflect the outbreak definition that now states the definition of an outbreak will be two or more lab-confirmed cases (resident, staff and/or visitor) in a home, within a 14-day period, that have an epidemiological link and where at least one person could have reasonably acquired their infection in the home. At the same time, the definition of a suspect outbreak will include instances of a single resident case. Public health units will continue to be responsible for declaring an outbreak. On April 23rd we received an additional update for [Directive #3](#) that states fully immunized staff are now permitted to work in more than one LTC Home, health care setting or retirement home (unless otherwise directed by a local Medical Officer of Health).

Surveillance Testing

The approved PanBio Kit rapid antigen testing options were also noted, and individuals are able to choose from the following choices:

- Nasopharyngeal swab – must be completed by a regulated health care provider
- Deep Nasal Swab
- Nares - swab of throat and both nares
- Shallow (anterior) nasal swab

As of March 31st, Ontario Health West notified homes that all PanBio kits in stock would only contain the 3 nasal choices. Self swabbing was also approved in March and our surveillance teams are working to train staff on this new process. On average, our care communities conduct over 1,400 rapid antigen tests weekly.

The updated Directive also addressed removing the health data collection for temperatures related to team members and visitors. The electronic screening tool was updated to reflect the change on April 22nd.

IPAC Strategies

Eye Protection was fully implemented at all three locations on March 12th based on the recommendation from the Ministry of Labour. Staff, DCPs and visitors are required to wear the additional PPE when a 2 meter distance cannot be maintained.

Vaccination

Grey Bruce Public Health announced on March 16th that the second vaccine interval dose schedule has been extended to 16 weeks for staff and Designated Care Partners. On March 23rd our Care Communities received notification that the vaccine schedule would be based on the 28-day interval. Vaccine clinics were led by Public Health on March 28th, 29th and April 1st. Staff vaccination rate for the three care communities is approximately 74% which is higher than the overall provincial average.

Visiting and DCP Program

The Colour It Connect program continues to be very beneficial and the online booking tool includes virtual, window, indoor and outdoor stations. Our electronic screening tool was updated to reflect rapid antigen testing questions and the 30 second hug has been extended to include outdoor visits as these visitors are actively screened and tested upon arrival.

Our DCP program currently has 350 active DCPs, regular communication including updates, policy review and educational resources are provided to keep them informed.

Grey County Long Term Care was invited to present our DCP program at the March 25th Essential Together Huddles: Connecting for peer to peer learning and support. This is a national huddle coordinated by Healthcare Excellence Canada. Our program was also featured at the Advantage Ontario Annual Convention on May 5th & 6th, Grey County partnered with The Ontario Caregiver Organization and Centres for Learning Research and Innovation in Long-Term-Care (CLRI) to present Partners In Care; Supporting Safe & Meaningful Caregiver Presence During Covid-19 & Beyond.

Grey County also partnered with Plan A and StaffStat for a 45-minute recorded discussion to share 'How we Handled the Staffing Shortage: Field Notes from County of Grey'

Staffing

Recruitment of staff continues. On March 23rd we received notification from the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development that the Essential Skills Supportive Care micro-certification program was approved for funding. This is a local partnership with YMCA, Georgian College and Grey County in collaboration with the Grey and Bruce Long Term Care Homes. We are excited about this new fully funded educational opportunity and have introduced this program to our incumbent team members for the first session. Many of the long term care homes in our area are participating and the course is scheduled to start May 17th. All three locations have introduced this program to our current staff and submitted 13 referrals from our three locations.

Funding

On March 18, 2021, the province announced the extension of the \$3 per hour Temporary Wage Enhancement (TWE) for PSWs working in long-term care homes. The program was originally approved for the period of October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 and has now been extended for the period April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021. The Province has advised that a funding package to support the extension is underway.

On March 22, 2021, the Ministry suspended long-term care home accommodation rate changes for the 2020-2021 rate cycle (effective July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021). To ensure that long-term care homes will not lose any revenue resulting from this suspension, the province has promised to compensate long-term care homes for the preferred accommodation premium increases that would have been applicable during the cycle.

On April 1, 2021, the province advised that the 2021-22 Testing Adherence program would be funded through the Prevention and Containment funding. The 2020-21 Testing Adherence Program previously received dedicated funding. Homes are still required to comply with applicable screening and testing requirements.

On April 8, 2021, the Ministry advised that the Temporary Emergency Licenses that were issued to the homes on March 25, 2020 have now expired. Under this temporary license, Grey Gables and Rockwood Terrace were issued two beds each and Lee Manor was issued one bed. The Ministry has confirmed that no new Temporary Emergency Licenses will be re-issued at County of Grey homes.

On April 16, 2021, the Ministry advised that Lee Manor's application for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) Long Term Care stream was approved. Lee Manor has received federal and provincial approval for the HVAC Air Conditioning and Ventilation Upgrade project. This project includes a Federal contribution of \$520,000

and a Provincial contribution of \$130,000 for a total of \$650,000 in funding. A report will follow when the Transfer Payment Agreement arrives.

On April 23, 2021, The Ministry issued a directive stating that the co-payment will be waived for patients in “Alternate Level of Care” beds in hospitals who agree to move to a long-term care home that is not their preferred home. This waiver will apply until the patient is either transferred to a home of their choosing or decline an offer to move to their preferred home, and they will maintain their priority status on the waitlist of their preferred home in the meantime. Homes will be reimbursed for the lost revenue through the regular occupancy funding process.

Partnerships

Work continues with partnerships at both regional and local levels. The Grey Bruce Long Term Care Committee and healthcare partners continue to meet regularly. The long-term care homes attend the Public Health led meetings every two weeks. Regular meetings continue with the Southwest Region Pandemic Planning, Wave 2 Response and the Grey Bruce Integrated Health Coalition, these groups play a critical role in ongoing pandemic planning and preparation.

Going forward work continues on outbreak strategies, implementing new COVID educational resources, managing and monitoring and ordering weekly PPE supplies to maintain a minimum 8-week supply.

We continue to be thankful for the support from 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

- [Minister's Directive COVID-19 Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing](#)
- [AsDM Memo: Updated Direction on the Rapid Antigen Screening Program](#)
- [Updated FAQs Enhancing Protection for Long-Term Care Home](#)
- [Surveillance Testing in Long Term Care Homes Fact Sheet](#)
- [Rapid Antigen screening of asymptomatic people as a Public Health tool to combat COVID-19 March 2 2021](#)
- [Essential Together Huddles: Connecting for peer-to-peer learning and support \(healthcareexcellence.ca\)](#)
- [Minister's Letter: PSW TWE Extension](#)
- [Minister's Letter: LTC Co-Pay Accommodation Rate Changes](#)
- [ADM Letter: MLTC Testing Adherence](#)
- [Lee Manor Temporary Emergency License Expiry](#)
- [Rockwood Terrace Temporary Emergency License Expiry](#)
- [ADM Letter: Supporting Long-Term Care Placements](#)