

# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Chair and Members of the Committee of Management
<b>Committee Date:</b>	June 29, 2021
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	LTCR-CM-14-21
<b>Title:</b>	LTC COVID 19 Update
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	Adopted as presented by Long-Term Care Committee of Management through Resolution CM22-21; Endorsed by County Council CC55-21

## Recommendation

1. That report **LTCR-CM-14-21 regarding a Long-Term Care COVID-19 Status Update** be received for information.

## Executive Summary

The province moved out of the Stay at Home order on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and began down the road to recovery. Our three care communities continue to be proactive and stay on top of the ever-changing restrictions and guidelines. On May 12<sup>th</sup> Patient Ombudsman released the Honouring Voices and Experiences survey which we provided to residents, caregivers, and staff. The data collected will be shared publicly later this year as part of the ongoing investigation into long term care homes with COVID-19 outbreaks. Our IPAC strategies continue to be monitored and updated to ensure all measures are in place to keep our residents, families, and team members safe. A number of updates to the ministry directives and guidelines have been received and are outlined below.

## Updates

### New Directives

Over the last two months, we have received many updates to Directive 3, guidance documents and FAQs.

On May 4<sup>th</sup> the highlights to the documents included the following:

- Fully immunized staff may now work in more than one location
- Active screening of staff and visitors is only required upon arrival to care community
- Resuming communal dining and indoor social activities among residents based on immunization formula
  - Total resident coverage rate = (number of fully immunized residents ÷ total number of residents in the home) × 100
- Residents who are fully immunized and their caregivers who are fully immunized may choose to have close physical contact such as hugging or holding hands
- Fully immunized caregivers may also join a fully immunized resident during mealtime
- Eye protection has now been added as mandatory PPE along with mask
  - Grey County implemented this strategy on March 12<sup>th</sup>

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the province announced the [Roadmap to Recovery](#) and on May 21<sup>st</sup> an update to Outdoor visiting for long term care homes was released. These changes were effective May 22<sup>nd</sup> and our teams worked quickly to ensure outdoor visiting resumed. Additional updates were also received on May 22<sup>nd</sup> for Directive 3, Guidance Document, [Visitor Policy](#) and FAQ.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Ministry released changes to absences and visiting that were effective June 9<sup>th</sup>. The documents included an update to [Directive #3](#), [Guidance FAQ](#), and a [Visitor, Absences Snapshot](#). The changes were related to the following:

- Social and temporary absences for those residents who are fully immunized will now be permitted.
- An extension to the outdoor visiting stations included residents with mobility limitations or health conditions (i.e. factors unrelated to weather) that make participating at an outdoor visit can schedule an indoor visit with a maximum of 1 caregiver.
- Regardless of resident and visitor vaccination status, brief hugs can now take place. Fully immunized residents and visitors may have close physical contact, including handholding.
- Essential Caregivers and general visitors who are fully immunized can have close physical contact with the resident and are not required to wear eye protection whether visiting indoors or outdoors.

### Surveillance Testing

The care communities' surveillance testing teams continue to test an average of 1,400 rapid antigen tests weekly during the lockdown. Outdoor visitors are required to

complete active screening upon arrival but are no longer required to undergo rapid antigen testing.

All three care communities have experienced positive antigen tests, PCR results all returned negative. Our Clinical teams continue to work with Public Health, labs, and couriers to ensure quick turnaround is achieved. We have worked with Grey Bruce Health Services in Owen Sound to utilize their COVID PCR Testing to quickly rule out a true positive if 24 hours lab turnaround is unavailable.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> the Ministry released an update to surveillance testing guidance:

- Individuals who have previously been diagnosed with and cleared of a COVID-19 infection will now be required to resume asymptomatic screening testing after 90 days from their COVID-19 infection (based on the date of their positive result).

### IPAC Strategies

IPAC leads continue to complete monthly IPAC audits along with regular hand hygiene audits.

Our clinical teams regularly review our IPAC strategies, on May 19<sup>th</sup> the 24-hr. hold on items received was lifted and have updated our visiting guidelines to allow pets.

Mandatory change of uniforms was implemented in March 2020 due to the possibility of fomite transmission of COVID-19. The concerns related to fomite transmission are now considered a low risk. Effective June 7<sup>th</sup> change of uniform before and after shift is no longer mandatory. This risk is also low for Designated Care Partners (DCPs) and they will no longer be required to wear a gown when visiting.

Clarification from the Ministry was received, and mandatory eye protection remains in place for all team members, unimmunized Designated Care Partners and general visitors who are visiting at an indoor station.

### Vaccination

On May 10<sup>th</sup> the government announced that high risk health care workers are eligible to receive their second dose sooner than the extended four-month interval. Our care communities continue to onboard new team members and DCPs who require the vaccine. Vaccinations rates play a crucial role in the road to recovery and we are currently working collaboratively with other long term care homes in the area to create options for equitable vaccine access. The group presented a pilot project to Grey Bruce Public Health which outlined the option for LTC homes to administer the vaccine in house. We received notification on May 27<sup>th</sup> from Public Health that vaccines would be

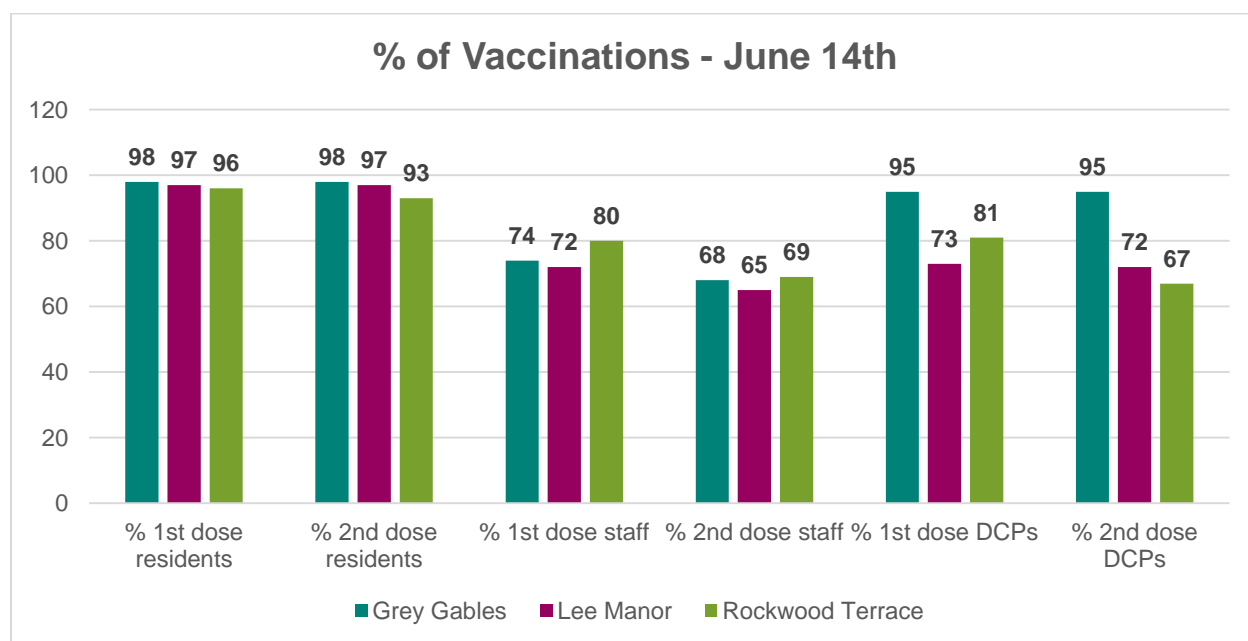
arriving for on-site clinics May 28<sup>th</sup>, 128 vaccines were administered to residents, staff and DCPs amongst the three locations.

On May 31<sup>st</sup> the MLTC released a new [Minister's Directive](#) that outlines all long term care homes are required to have a COVID-19 Immunization Policy in effect as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 with 30 days to implement.

The immunization policy will require all persons to select one of the following options:

1. provide proof of **vaccination** against COVID-19; or
2. provide written proof of **a medical reason** for not being vaccinated against COVID-19; or
3. completion of a COVID-19 vaccination **educational program**

Our current vaccination rates are:



### Visiting and DCP Program

Our Designated Care Partner (DCP) Program continues to be strong and remains with one (1) DCP per resident visit as per step 1 guidelines unless visiting at an outdoor station. Recently, we were asked to be a guest at a Healthcare Change Makers, Inspiring Impact podcast with Advantage Ontario and Health Insurance Reciprocal of Canada. The podcast focused on a discussion about Grey County's Colour It Your Way Resident Centered Model which has been our guide as we built the framework for our DCP Program.

Our outdoor visiting stations reopened on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, and our online booking tool was reactivated. Two visitors may visit at one time, the guidance document allows two Designated Care Partners to also join the visit.

As per Public Health Ontario there have been limited reports of animals becoming infected with COVID-19. There is currently no evidence that pets or other domestic animals play a significant role in the spread of COVID-19. This is welcome news as pet therapy has proven to be very beneficial for residents and on May 19<sup>th</sup> our visiting policy was updated to reflect this change. Our clinical team also reviewed our quarantine practice for items received and removed the 24-hour hold.

On June 10<sup>th</sup> a Virtual Family Meeting was held to provide families and friends clarification related to the recent updates.

### Staffing

The Essential Skills Supportive Care micro-certification program started their first session on May 17<sup>th</sup>, followed by the second session on May 25<sup>th</sup>. This program is open to many healthcare sectors in the area and we are excited to be part of this important project.

On May 27<sup>th</sup> an [FAQ](#) was received to clarify the single site amendment. Fully immunized staff may now work in more than one location and we have seen a few staff return. Many staff that chose another workplace have only received their 1<sup>st</sup> dose and are not eligible to return at this time.

We continue to recruit for Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Personal Support Workers and Care Support Assistants.

### Funding

On May 3, 2021, the Ministry of Long Term Care announced a new funding program Medication Safety Technology (MST) program to support long-term care homes in adopting technologies that support medication management systems. The Ministry will be providing up to \$21,053,600 to the long-term care sector in 2021-22 to strengthen medication safety and increase the adoption of medication safety technologies across the sector. All eligible long-term care homes will receive a per diem amount in accordance with the number of licensed or approved beds in operation in the home. Under this new program, Grey Gables will receive \$1,487 per month, Lee Manor will receive \$3,307 per month and Rockwood Terrace will receive \$2,233 per month.

On May 7, 2021, additional COVID-19 funding was announced as part of the Ministry of Long-Term Care's ongoing effort to assist with prevention and containment efforts. The

funding model used by the Ministry has been updated to provide a funding allocation to homes that reflects their average quarterly expenditures reported April to December 2020 with a 5% increase to account for additional costs incurred that may not have been captured in the report. The Ministry transferred three tranches of funding for the months of April to June 2021. Under this new funding model, Grey Gables received \$58,100 per month for a total of \$174,300. Lee Manor received \$97,700 per month for a total of \$293,100. Rockwood Terrace received \$71,200 per month for a total of \$231,600.

On May 26, 2021, the Ministry extended the freeze on the annual rate increase to the long-term care resident co-payment scheduled for July 1, 2021 to January 1, 2022. The Ministry will ensure that long term care homes will not lose any revenue resulting from the deferral and will fully fund the level of care increases that would have been collected from basic accommodation co-payments. In addition, the Ministry will compensate for the preferred accommodation premium increases that would have been applicable during the deferral period.

On June 11, 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 June 30, 2021 and has now been extended to August 23, 2021. Payment allocations are being made in regular installments to long term care homes based on the number of beds per home. These payments fund the \$3/hour wage plus statutory entitlements such as vacation pay, holiday pay, overtime, employer contributions such as Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI), Employer Health Tax, and increases in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) premiums.

## Partnerships

Work continues with partnerships at both regional and local levels. The Grey Bruce Long Term Care Committee and healthcare partners 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 response. Grey County continues to provide resources to other long term care homes in the province when requested.

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

- [AsDM Memo: Upcoming Changes Related to Absences and Visitors Policy](#)
- [Updated FAQs: Directive #3, MLTC Guidance, and Visiting Policy](#)
- [Visitor, Absences and Social Gatherings Snapshot](#)