

April 28, 2021

MEMO TO: Retirement Home Licensees

FROM: Jacqueline Cureton
Assistant Deputy Minister

SUBJECT: Supporting Placements of Alternate Level of Care Patients in Retirement Homes

Ontario continues to diligently monitor and take decisive action to stop the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of Ontarians, especially seniors and the most vulnerable in retirement homes.

In response to the recent rapid rise in hospitalizations, the government is increasing system capacity by expanding the use of beds and services of retirement homes for alternate level of care (ALC) patients, while protecting the health and safety of patients, and retirement home residents and staff.

Today, I am sharing additional changes that will support you in addressing staffing needs and provide extra help to new residents that are placed in a retirement home.

Transferring Patients to Retirement Homes

The government has re-established a previous emergency order through [O. Reg. 317/21](#) (Agreements between Health Service Providers and Retirement Homes) to support the transfer of ALC patients to retirement homes while ensuring that certain labour relations implications that may apply in hospitals are not unintentionally transferred to retirement homes. This will help support hospital system capacity by enabling timely transfer of patients to retirement homes.

Single Site Order

Recognizing the success of the provincial vaccination program that prioritized retirement homes, the government has amended O. Reg. 158/20 (Limiting Work to a Single Retirement Home) through [O. Reg. 318/21](#) to allow fully immunized retirement home staff to work in more than one retirement home, health care setting or long-term care home (unless otherwise directed by a local medical officer of health). "Fully immunized" means a person has received the total number of required doses of a vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., two doses for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) and it has been at least 14 days since they received their final dose.

Isolation Requirements

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) has issued an updated [Directive #3](#) with modified isolation requirements for residents who are being admitted/transferred to a home that reflects the impact of vaccination and the latest scientific understanding of incubation periods:

- For **fully immunized residents**, a lab-based PCR test is required at the time of admission/transfer. The individual must be placed in isolation if the test result is pending. If the test result is negative, the individual does not need to isolate.
- For **partially immunized or unimmunized residents**, a laboratory-based PCR test is required at the time of admission/transfer and the resident must be placed in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. In order for isolation to discontinue on day 10, the individual must have a negative test result on day 8.
- **Recently recovered residents** who are within 90 days from the date their positive laboratory test was taken are not required to be tested or placed in isolation.

Widespread vaccination in the retirement homes sector has meant significant reductions in cases and outbreaks, creating an environment where these changes can be made safely to support additional staff capacity in homes.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of retirement home residents and staff. We are available to support homes directly should you have any questions. My team can be reached by emailing RHInquiries@Ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Jacqueline Cureton
Assistant Deputy Minister

c: Denise A. Cole, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
Jay O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer and Registrar, Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority
Cathy Hecimovich, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Retirement Communities Association