

June 23, 2023

MEMORANDUM TO: Retirement Homes

FROM: Jacqueline Cureton, Assistant Deputy Minister
Seniors and Accessibility Policy, Programs and Strategic
Partnerships
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

SUBJECT: MSAA COVID-19 Guidance Updates

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) has been in consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) regarding important infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices that should be integrated in the routine operations of retirement homes during the current state of COVID-19. These discussions have been informed by lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, lower infection levels in the sector and considering the virus' activity is now expected to be steady and fluctuate at a baseline level.

Through these consultations, MSAA aligned with other ministries responsible for congregate living settings to ensure that only necessary COVID-19 protocols remain in place for resident safety. As a result, the *Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility COVID-19 Guidance Document for Retirement Homes in Ontario (MSAA COVID-19 Guidance)* has been revised to reflect the appropriate evidence-based preventative measures, while prioritizing resident well-being, reducing staffing burdens, and addressing operator feedback.

As of **June 26, 2023**, the following changes will be in effect, however understanding that some homes may face resource challenges, we are providing operators until **June 30, 2023**, to implement the changes.

- **Masking:** Indoor masking will be required for staff, students, volunteers and Essential Visitors who are health care workers based on a [point-of-care risk assessment](#). Masks will be recommended but not required for staff and Essential Visitors who are not health care workers (e.g., families, friends, and Essential Caregivers who are not health care workers), as well as General Visitors.
- **Resident Symptom Assessments:** Homes should only continue to assess residents who are symptomatic, COVID-19 cases, and close contacts for signs and symptoms. Temperature checks will no longer be required.
- **Personal Protective Equipment Training:** There will no longer be safety review requirements for General Visitors, Essential Visitors, and Personal Care Service Providers.

- **General Visitors with COVID-19 Symptoms:** General Visitors should avoid entering the home for 10 days after COVID-19 symptom onset, if possible. If the visit is essential to the resident's mental/physical well-being, the visitors may come into the home, wearing a mask at all times.

Thank you for your ongoing support with the implementation of these important IPAC measures in retirement homes. They help to ensure the safety and well-being of retirement home residents and staff. If you have any additional questions, please contact our team at RHinquiries@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Jacqueline Cureton
Assistant Deputy Minister

- c: Melissa Thomson, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
Jay O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer and Registrar, Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority
Cathy Hecimovich, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Retirement Communities Association
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario