

CCIR# 54.0

## CONTINUING CARE INFORMATION RELEASE

**TO:** Long Term Care Facilities

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**FROM:** Vicki Elliot-Lopez, Senior Executive Director, Continuing Care Division, Health and Wellness

**DATE:** July 17, 2020

**RE:** Changes to LTC Directive: Indoor/outdoor visits, gatherings, facility-based hair salons, local bus trips (no disembarking) – COVID19

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As you know, LTC visitor restrictions have been in place since March with recent changes made to permit outdoor visits. While these restrictions are important for resident and staff safety, there is a need to balance public health and safety restrictions/measures with unintended impacts on the quality of life of residents and their families. We currently have no COVID-19 cases in LTC facilities, and very few outside of facilities.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health has approved the following changes to the LTC Directive. All changes identified below can be implemented effective July 22, 2020. However, facilities are not required to implement these changes on that date. We understand planning would be required for the visits and each facility should develop a plan within reasonable timelines.

The changes below relate to resident visitation (indoor and expanded outdoor), gathering sizes within facilities, facility-based licensed hair salons, and local “sightseeing” bus trips (no disembarking of residents or staff).

### **Outdoor Visitation (expanded):**

Up to five (5) visitors per resident for outdoor visits in LTC (NH and RCF) will now be permitted while observing public health measures. Visits will allow for limited physical contact while masked (e.g. a quick hug, shaking hands with appropriate hand hygiene measures, etc.). The visitors and resident must be wearing masks throughout the visit (medical grade for residents, non-medical grade for visitors). Outside of this brief physical contact, it is expected that physical distancing will be maintained.

### **Indoor Visitation (new):**

Indoor visits will now be permitted in LTC (NH and RCF) while observing public health measures. Residents or substitute decision makers can designate up to three (3) individuals as family/social visitors. These friends and family members may visit residents in a designated location in the facility. Visits will allow for limited physical contact while masked (e.g. a quick hug, shaking hands with appropriate hand hygiene measures, etc.). The visitor and resident must be wearing medical masks throughout the visit. Outside of this brief physical contact, it is expected that physical distancing will be maintained.

Indoor visitation to LTC facilities will be permitted provided the following measures are in place:

- Only one (1) family/social visitor is allowed per resident in the facility for indoor visitation at one time.
- Indoor visitation will occur in space designated by the facility for such visits, ideally near the facility entrance. If there are mobility concerns for a resident, the facility should identify a more convenient designated room (such as the resident’s room) for this to occur.

- Indoor visitors are required to wear a medical mask provided by the facility, practice hand and respiratory hygiene, follow physical distancing, and be screened by staff.
- Visits must be pre-scheduled with the facility.
- Staff must escort visitors to and from visitation and remain in the room for the duration of the visit.
- Visitation will only occur with one pre-identified resident.
- Visitation area and touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected according to IPAC guidelines before and after each visit.

#### **Licensed Hair Salons:**

Licensed hair salons that operate within LTC homes can also reopen to long term care residents only. Licensed hairdressing service providers must follow the industry guidelines and protocols set out by the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia and submit a safety plan to the facility. These guidelines require both service providers and clients to wear a mask. Services are required to be cancelled if either the service provider or the client is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms and/or respiratory illness. All operators and facilities must retain a list of every resident who has received services and when these services were provided.

#### **On-site Resident Gatherings:**

On site gatherings of up to 10 people (including residents and staff) will be permitted. Gatherings could be for the purposes of group dining, gathering for recreation activities and for socialization. Facilities are expected to group the same residents together each time and maintain consistent programming staff where possible. Cleaning, hand hygiene and other protocols will be implemented before and after gatherings. At this time, visitors are not permitted to attend or participate in indoor activities/gatherings

#### **Off-site Bus Trips:**

LTC facilities will be permitted to use LTC facility owned and operated or leased buses to take up to 10 people (including residents, staff and driver) for "sightseeing" drives off the grounds of the facility. Residents and staff will not be permitted to disembark during the drive. Bus drivers will be required to be screened, as per the protocols identified for indoor visitors. Facilities will be asked to group the same residents together for these outings, minimizing mixing of residents. Cleaning, hand hygiene and other protocols must be implemented by the facility prior to boarding and after disembarking the vehicle.

If leased buses are used, the facility must ensure that driver screening occurs, that buses are cleaned before and after use, and that all public health measures are followed. Close contact between the driver and staff/residents should be limited.

Residents must continue to remain within the facility and its grounds for all other reasons/activities except those previously identified (e.g. essential medical appointments). Other offsite activities are not permitted at this time.

#### **Implementation:**

We know that the preparations that each facility must make to support these activities are different. July 22, 2020 is the effective date of the updated LTC Directive for all changes identified in this communication. We understand planning will be required for the visits and each facility should develop a plan within reasonable timelines.

To support the implementation of these changes, a visitation guidance document has been updated and is attached to this CCIR. It contains sample communication pieces, a tool that facilities can use to screen potential visitors for COVID-19 and other resources. FAQs have also been developed and are attached.