

**Ontario to Resume Family Visits in Long-Term Care Homes,  
Retirement Homes, and Other Residential Care Settings**

*Strict Health and Safety Guidelines Will Be Required to Protect Residents, Visitors and Staff*

June 11, 2020 1:15 P.M.

TORONTO — In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government announced the gradual resumption of visits to long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other residential care settings.

Family and friends will be allowed access to these settings beginning June 18, 2020. Long-term care homes will allow outdoor visits of one person per resident each week at a minimum. Retirement homes will resume indoor and outdoor visits in designated areas or resident suites when physical distancing can be maintained. Other residential care settings will be able to allow outdoor visits of two people at time. Physical distancing will be required for all visits. This approach will ensure the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, and Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

"Thanks to the hard work of our frontline workers and the collective efforts of everyone in stopping the spread, we can now allow families to reunite with their loved ones safely and in person with strict public health measures to protect residents, visitors and staff," said Premier Ford. "But I ask everyone to be cautious and act responsibly as the battle to contain COVID-19 is not over and the risk to our loved ones still remains."

Visits will resume next Thursday, one week after the release of visitor guidelines. They will be subject to strict health and safety protocols, including requiring visitors to pass active screening every time they visit, confirming with staff that they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks, and complying with the infection prevention and control protocols. This includes bringing and wearing a face covering during visits.

Additionally, long-term care and retirement homes, as well as other residential care settings, must meet the following conditions before they welcome visitors:

- Homes must not be in outbreak;
- Homes must have an established process for communicating visitor protocol and the associated safety procedures; and
- Homes must maintain the highest infection prevention and control standards.

For retirement homes, visitor admissions will vary from home to home depending upon their individual circumstances.

"We know the visitor restrictions have been tough on residents, as families and loved ones play an important role in providing care and emotional support to residents. We are confident these visits can occur safely," said Minister Fullerton. "With the possible spread of COVID-19 in our long-term care homes still being a real threat, people will need to follow strict health and safety protocols in order to protect our most vulnerable."

"Seniors living in retirement homes have been doing their part to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Our government appreciates their cooperation and we are happy they will soon be able to enjoy visits with family and friends while continuing to stay safe."

Other residential care settings will also be allowed visitors under similar rules. These residential care settings include homes serving people with developmental disabilities, shelters for survivors of gender-based violence, and children's residential settings.

"We are all looking forward to the day when we can once again see family and friends, and spend time together," said Minister Smith. "Today is an important first step in reconnecting loved ones who have been separated all spring."

As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves in Ontario, the direction on visits at long-term care homes, retirement homes and residential settings will continually be updated keeping the safety and emotional wellbeing of residents and staff at the forefront.

Visits have been restricted since mid-March, with only essential visitors permitted to enter long-term care and retirement homes.

## **QUICK FACTS**

- In the event of an outbreak at an individual home or residential care setting, non-essential visits will again be restricted. If a second wave of COVID-19 occurs, the government will revert to restricting visitors at all homes and residential care settings to protect residents and staff.
- These public health restrictions for long-term care homes, retirement homes, and residential settings are meant to provide meaningful and equitable access to visits for all residents, while considering the staffing and space capacity available to the home to maintain safety of residents, staff and visitors.
- The government recently announced the launch of an independent, non-partisan commission into Ontario's long-term care system beginning in July 2020. Details of the commission are now being finalized, including the terms of reference, membership, leadership of the commission and reporting timelines.
- Testing of long-term care and retirement home residents and staff for COVID-19 has been completed, or is in the process of being completed, with additional rounds of testing currently underway.

## LEARN MORE

- [Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care Homes](#)
- [Reopening Retirement Homes](#)
- [Resuming Visits in Congregate Living Settings](#)
- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.
- The [COVID-19 Action Plan: Long-Term Care Homes](#) outlines the steps that the government is taking to protect residents and staff in long-term care homes.
- [Emergency information and orders.](#)
- [Ontario Taking Action on Key Recommendations from Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System.](#)
- For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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