Memo

To: Families and Friends of People Supported by Community Living York South

From: Sandra Caravan, Executive Director

Re: Updated Family Visits in Group Homes

Date: July 22, 2020

Thank you all for your ongoing patience and support in meeting the expectations set out regarding family visits on June 15, 2020. We are pleased to announce that effective July 22, 2020 the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services announced revised guidelines for visits to group homes. Following these guidelines, you will be welcome to visit your family member in-home where possible and we continue to of visits outside of the home in backyards.

All of these visits will continue to require that many of the guidelines previously established by the Ministry are still met, as well as some additional requirements related to the actual home where your family member lives.

As previously communicated, these guidelines were developed to ensure the ongoing health and safety of all.

At this point, as per the MCCSS guidelines, we will only be doing inside visits where the physical space allow us to do so safely.

The following baseline requirements for congregate living settings must be met prior to the site being able to accept any non-essential visitors:

1. The congregate living site must NOT be currently in outbreak (i.e. at least one active COVID-19 case among a resident or staff member).
	1. In the event that a site experiences an outbreak, all non-essential visits must be discontinued. In accordance with prior operational direction, sites in outbreak must establish compliance with all CMOH directives for congregate living settings in outbreak and follow directions from the local public health unit (PHU).
2. The agency has established:
	1. A process for communicating with residents, families and staff about the resumption of in-home visits and the associated procedures, including but not limited to infection prevention and control (IPAC), scheduling and any home- specific policies.
		1. This process must include sharing an information package with visitors on IPAC, masking and other operational procedures such as limiting movement inside the congregate care setting, if applicable, and restricting visitor use of the washroom (except for hand hygiene purposes) and ensuring visitors’ agreement to comply prior to each visit. Supporting materials must include an approach to dealing with non- adherence to these policies and procedures, including the discontinuation of visits.
	2. Dedicated areas for both indoor and outdoor visits.
	3. A list/log of visitor available for relevant staff to access.
3. Protocols are in place to maintain the highest of IPAC standards prior to, during and after visits, which include that:
	1. The visitor must wear a non-medical mask (essential visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask) when visiting inside or outside the home and maintain proper respiratory etiquette and hand washing be followed for visitors and residents before and after visiting;
	2. Education on all required protocols will be provided by the home;
	3. There are designated spaces outdoors and indoors (as applicable);
	4. There is adequate staffing to implement the protocols related to visitations (alongside continuation of ongoing operations within the setting);
	5. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the space will occur before and during visits following recommended IPAC standards;
	6. Where appropriate, the congregate living setting is able to facilitate visits in a manner aligned with physical distancing protocols, including identifying a space(s) where visiting takes place and the areas that are off-limits to visitors (e.g. bathrooms (except for hand hygiene purposes as needed), common areas, etc.); and,
	7. Any non-adherence to these rules could be the basis for discontinuation of visits.

**A.** Visitor Requirements

1. Prior to each visit, the visitor must:
	1. Pass an active screening questionnaire that screens for signs and symptoms of and potential exposures to COVID-19.
	2. Previous requirements stating that all non-essential (i.e family, friend) visitors attest that they tested negative for COVID-19 within the previous 2 weeks and subsequently not tested positive are **no longer** required.
2. Read and agree to the parameters of the visit set out by the agency in compliance with this document and public health direction.
3. Comply with the congregate living setting’s infection, prevention and control (IPAC) protocols, including proper use of non-medical masks.
	1. Visitors should use a non-medical mask AT ALL TIMES during the visit regardless of whether it is conducted indoors or outdoors. Non-essential visitors are responsible for bringing their own non-medical mask for visits.
	2. Any non-adherence to these rules could be the basis for the discontinuation of visits.

Essential Overnight Absences:

An essential overnight absence (e.g. to a family home) is one considered necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights, of a resident.

Agencies should take careful consideration as to whether an overnight absence is truly vital to maintain the health, wellness and safety of a resident.

This should include whether the support or care to be provided during the absence could be reasonably, safely, and fully assumed by agency staff, or reasonably, safely and fully assumed by an essential visitor to the resident at the residence under the existing visitor policy (instead of through an absence).

Upon return from any overnight absence, the resident must:

1. Pass active screening

2. Self-isolate / limit contact with other residents for 14 days

3. Using a face covering, where possible, in common areas like dining rooms, recreation areas etc.

4. Self-monitor for symptoms

Thank you. Take care and stay well.

