



# MEMO

**TO:** Staff, Residents and Families

**From:** Trisha DesLaurier CEO

**Date:** December 15, 2021

## **Enhanced Measures for Valley Manor**

We are experiencing a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in Ontario. This trend is expected to continue over the coming weeks as a result of the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

Based on recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, we are notifying everyone of temporary enhanced measures that are required right away to reduce the risk of the virus entering the home.

These temporary enhanced and responsive measures are necessary to provide optimal safety and support to residents, while balancing the mental and emotional well-being of residents and their families, and to safeguard the staff who are critical to the care of residents.

We must reinforce the need for vigilance and best practice. See enhanced measures below:

- Valley Manor is strongly urging caregivers and staff to get a third / booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Emerging evidence suggests that three doses of vaccine are significantly more effective against the Omicron variant than two doses.
- Avoid large group social activities for residents and staff inside homes and ensure staff know the current provincial and local rules about social gatherings
- Everyone is reminded of the importance of remaining vigilant with public health measures, such as masking while in the home and social distancing, both in the home and in the community. Enhanced Measures Our LTC homes are part of the fabric of communities.



- **In Effect No Later than December 15 at 7pm:** General visitors must be fully vaccinated (or have a valid medical exemption) to come into homes, unless they are visiting a resident receiving end of life care. Infants under 1 year of age are not considered visitors and may enter the home without being subject to surveillance testing. As children under 5 years old are unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, they will be unable to come into a home at this time.
- **In Effect No Later than December 15 at 7pm:** Outdoor visits can occur regardless of vaccination status where homes have warm outdoor visiting spaces that support safe visits (e.g., physical distancing). Valley Manor can offer window visits and social media visits based on staff availability.

### **Effective December 17 (unless otherwise noted):**

- All staff, students, volunteers and caregivers must be surveillance tested at least 2 times per week. Homes may wish to go beyond this province-wide requirement based on local factors
- All general visitors and support workers must be tested each time they attend at a home unless they have a negative test from the previous day.
- All currently designated caregivers must provide proof of a first dose of vaccine (or a valid medical exemption) by December 20 to enter a home, unless they are visiting a resident receiving end of life care. These caregivers will then have until February 21 to be fully vaccinated. Until fully vaccinated, these caregivers will be limited to visiting their loved one in their room.
- A maximum of 2 caregivers can be designated by a resident and any newly designated caregivers must be fully vaccinated to enter the home. If a resident currently has more than 2 designated caregivers that does not have to change. These changes are effective immediately.
- A maximum of 2 people (caregivers and visitors) per resident at a time for indoor visits, and 4 people (caregivers and visitors) per resident at a time for outdoor visits.
- Residents who are fully vaccinated may continue to leave the home for day absences and must be reminded of public health safety measures to follow when they are



outside of the home. Social overnight absences are being suspended at this time due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant. Residents who wish to leave the home overnight for social purposes will need to follow the appropriate discharge process, as well as the re-admission protocol when they return at a later date. o All residents may continue to leave the home for essential, medical or compassionate absences.

- To support the mental health and well-being of residents, activities within the home, such as communal dining and social activities continue to be permitted, however there should be no large group activities and residents should be cohorted for higher-risk activities like singing and dancing, in addition to dining. Further, with respect to dining, fully vaccinated caregivers may continue to join residents for communal dining / family-style meals, while remaining masked at all times.
- We encourage homes and families to work together to find and support safe opportunities for residents to visit with loved ones and interact with their fellow residents or to support virtual connections where in-person opportunities are not possible.
- As always, our continued appreciation for the commitment of you and your families as we take these difficult but necessary steps to safeguard long-term care homes.

**Please remember to be kind and understanding to the staff and Leadership at Valley Manor while implementing all of these directives. They are only doing their jobs and are taking direction from Ontario Health. Disrespectful behaviour towards any team members will not be tolerated from families, staff or residents and may result in further action with the Ministry of Health.**