



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Date: December 22, 2021

To: Long Term Care Home and Retirement Home Administrators

From: Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health

Subject: Enhanced restrictions pursuant to Directive #3

Recent events due to the rapid and unprecedented spread of Omicron have led to several changes in policies across the board in Ontario. The major concern is the vulnerability of seniors to breakthrough infections and reduced vaccine protection, and the need to prevent a potential crisis in our hospitals due to the onslaught of patients and a compromised healthcare workforce. At the same time, we are seeing a limited supply of rapid antigen tests and reduced capacity to meet the demand for widespread booster doses in Renfrew County and District. All compelling reasons to support enhanced restrictions.

As a result, Renfrew County and District Health Unit is directing owner and operators of Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes to institute the following changes immediately and until further notice:

1. Social absences and overnight stays are prohibited.
2. General visitation is prohibited.
3. Visitors are restricted to essential care givers and where possible to one at a time and will be required to complete rapid antigen tests 2 times per week. Essential caregivers are required to be fully vaccinated, unless they have a valid medical exemption or are attending to a resident in a palliative end-of-life situation. Caregivers will be required to have a first dose by December 20, 2021, and all required doses to be considered fully vaccinated by February 21, 2022. In the interim, designated caregivers who are not fully vaccinated would need to restrict their visit to the resident's room.
4. Professional care providers visiting more than one home need to have a card documenting where and when their last rapid antigen test was done. The card is valid for 48 hours unless the person develops new or worsening symptoms or has a new exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case.

5. Recognizing the impending shortage of rapid antigen tests, all homes are to restrict the limited supply of rapid antigen tests to their most appropriate use for staff and essential care givers.
6. Homes must conduct Infection prevention and control (IPAC) audits every two weeks at minimum when the home is not in an outbreak, and once weekly at minimum during an outbreak.
7. Retirement homes operating in RCD shall adhere to the COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario when implementing Directive 3.