

Bruyère Long-Term Care Visiting Policy – December 4, 2023

Preamble

There is an ongoing need to protect long-term care (LTC) home residents and staff from the risk of COVID-19, particularly as LTC home residents are more susceptible to infection from COVID-19 than the general population due to their age and medical condition. Rules for LTC home visits continue to be in place to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors, while supporting residents in receiving the care they need as well as maintaining their emotional well-being.

This policy is subject to change at any time depending on the applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

These measures have been implemented to balance the need to protect against the risk of COVID-19, and support residents in receiving the care they need, including maintaining their physical and emotional well-being and to adhere to the resident bill of rights #20 “Every resident has a right to ongoing and safe support from their caregivers to support their physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing and their quality of life and to assistance in contacting a caregiver or other person to support their needs.”

Definitions

Essential Visitors: a person performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services (e.g., phlebotomy) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident. There are three types of Essential visitors: **essential** care partner, compassionate-grounds visitor, and support worker.

1. **Essential Care Partner (ECP):** an individual who is designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision maker and is visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g., providing mealtime assistance, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). Examples of care partners include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators.
2. **Compassionate-grounds Visitor:** a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident.
3. **Support Worker:** a visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home. Examples of support workers include healthcare workers, maintenance workers or a person delivering food, provided they are not staff of the LTC home as defined in the *LTC Homes Act*.

Other visitors: There are three types of other visitors: government inspector, general visitor, support person (for a visitor).

1. Government inspector: person with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.
2. General Visitor: person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:
 - a. To provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision maker; and/or,
 - b. For social reasons (e.g., family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision maker assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection and relational continuity.
3. Support person (for a visitor): support persons help people with a disability perform daily tasks that they cannot do by themselves. For example, a support person might help with communication, mobility or personal care.

Individuals considered as “non visitors”: LTC home staff, volunteers and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the LTC Home’s licensee.

Outbreak: an outbreak of a disease of public health significance or communicable disease as defined in the Health Protection and Promotion Act. This includes epidemic or pandemic situations.

Emergency: situation requiring immediate action for the well-being of residents or the operations of the home. Examples include immediate repair of essential equipment (computer systems, lifts, fire safety systems, etc.) or immediate health requirements (X-ray technician, paramedics, police, physician, coroner, etc.).

Policy

1. Bruyère will support residents in receiving visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses to residents and staff of the home.
2. Bruyère will establish and implement visiting practices that comply, at a minimum, with the guidance in the relevant Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) policies.
3. Although COVID-19 immunizations are not mandatory for visitors, they are strongly recommended, particularly given the vulnerable resident population.
4. When in-person visits are not possible, Bruyère will work with the residents and their loved ones to find ways to facilitate interactions that ensure the satisfaction and safety of all involved, within our capabilities to offer such visits, depending on the demand.
5. Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating, or if the resident is in an area of the homes that is on outbreak. During an outbreak, and/or a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local public health unit will provide direction on visitors to the home, depending on the specific situation.

6. The homes will maintain a list of visitors (including essential visitors) who have entered the home. These include the name and contact information of the visitor, the date and time of the visits and the name of the resident visited. Visitors are to fill out this information in the book at the entrance upon arrival.
7. Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to any illness when determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate.
8. A visitor who tests positive for COVID-19 may resume visits to a home 10 days after infection.
9. Visitors must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as required. If a visitor is unable to wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE), the visitor will not be granted access to the home. Children who are younger than two years of age are not required to wear face coverings. Any other individual requesting an exception from required PPE is required to contact the home's leadership team.

Process

Requirements by visitor type

Refer to Appendix A for an outline of the requirements (including screening, guidelines, PPE, number of visitors and frequency of visits, etc.) for each type of visitor.

Process for becoming an Essential Care Partner

The resident or SDM may designate ECP(s). The decision to designate an individual as a care partner is entirely the remit of the resident and/or their SDM and not the home.

The designation should be made in writing to the home (see Appendix B for Designation Form).

The home will keep a record of essential care partners for each resident.

A resident and/or their SDM may change a designation in response to a change in the: 1) Resident's care needs that are reflected in the plan of care. 2) Availability of a ECP, either temporary (e.g., illness) or permanent. It is requested that a short-term change of ECP be for at least a month.

ECPs receive a formal training session and identification badge. ECPs must return their badge when they are no longer a care partner to a resident in the residence,

As of November 15, 2021, ECPs must have received at least two doses of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine or have a valid medical exemption provided by the province.

Visitors requiring a support person

A visitor may require a support person to help them visit a LTC home. A support person for any visitor should adhere to the home's visitor policy and follow the same screening and PPE requirements as visitors to the home.

A support person for any visitor does not count towards the maximum number of visitors.

A support person for a ECP does not need to be designated.

Visitors who need a support person should inform the home in advance so that the home can prepare accordingly.

Responding to Non-Adherence by Visitors

Bruyère recognizes that visitors are critical to supporting a resident's care needs and emotional well-being. Bruyère considers the impact of discontinuing visits on the resident's clinical and emotional well-being. Any consequences of non-adherence are done in order to protect residents, staff and visitors in the home from the risk of **any respiratory illness**.

Visitors are provided the home's visitor policy. The home supports the visitor in their learning needs, as required.

If the visitor does not adhere to the visitor policy, Bruyère considers the severity of the non-adherence and will respond accordingly.

Where Bruyère has previously ended a visit or temporarily prohibited a visitor, Bruyère will specify any education/ training the visitor may need to complete before visiting the home again.

Ending a Visit

Bruyère has the discretion to end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy, provided:

- The home has explained the applicable requirement(s) to the visitor;
- The visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) (e.g., there is sufficient space to physically distance, the home has supplied the PPE and demonstrated how to correctly put on PPE, etc.);
- The visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirement(s).
- Homes should document in the resident's chart (Family Communication type progress note) where they have ended a visit due to non-adherence.

Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor

Bruyère has the discretion to temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home's visitor policy. In exercising this discretion, homes should consider whether the non-adherence:

- Can be resolved successfully by explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements.
- Is within requirements that align with instruction in Directive #3 and guidance in this policy.
- Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors in the home.
- Is demonstrated continuously by the visitor over multiple visits.
- Is by a visitor whose previous visits have been ended by the home.
- Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor should:
 - Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted;
 - Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition;
 - Clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed (e.g. reviewing the home's visitor policy, reviewing specific Public Health Ontario resources, etc.); and,
 - Be documented by the home in the resident's chart (Family Communication type progress note).

Where the home has temporarily prohibited a ECP, the resident and/or their SDM may need to designate an alternate individual as care partner to help meet the resident's care needs.

Education Resources

The following guidance resources from [Public Health Ontario resources](#) should be reviewed by all visitors to the home:

Guidance document entitled [Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#).

Video entitled [Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Video entitled [Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Video entitled [How to Hand Wash](#).

Appendix A – Outline of requirements by visitor type

Appendix B – Essential Care Partner Designation Form

Appendix C - COVID-19 Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes

Appendix A

Outline of requirements by visitor type - Bruyère LTC visit guidelines

Categories	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Essential Care Partner</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Compassionate</u> <u>Grounds</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Support Worker</u>	GENERAL VISITOR
Screening	<p>Self-screening (passive) for symptoms of acute respiratory illnesses (ARI) and exposures (see Appendix C). If the visitor is unsure whether they can enter the home and requires more direction, they are encouraged to complete the screening form on www.bruyere.org (COVID-19 screening tool at the bottom of the home page).</p> <p>Must sign the visitor log upon entry.</p> <p>Must have received two doses unless they have a valid medical exemption provided by the ministry.</p> <p>A valid immunization proof must be provided during the sign-up process.</p>	<p>Self-screening (passive) for symptoms of COVID-19 and exposures (see Appendix C) If the visitor is unsure whether they can enter the home and requires more direction, they are encouraged to complete the screening app on www.bruyere.org (COVID-19 screening tool for visitors at the bottom of the home page).</p> <p>Must sign the visitor log upon entry.</p> <p>Does not need to be vaccinated for entry on compassionate grounds, but it is strongly recommended that all individuals coming for compassionate visits are immunized.</p>	<p>Self-screening (passive) for symptoms of COVID-19 and exposures (see Appendix C) If the visitor is unsure whether they can enter the home and requires more direction, they are encouraged to complete the screening app on www.bruyere.org (COVID-19 screening tool for visitors at the bottom of the home page).</p> <p>Must sign the visitor log upon entry.</p> <p>Does not need to be vaccinated, but it is strongly recommended that all essential visitors are immunized.</p>	<p>Self-screening (passive) for symptoms of ARI and exposures (see Appendix C). If the visitor is unsure whether they can enter the home and requires more direction, they are encouraged to complete the screening form on www.bruyere.org (COVID-19 screening tool for visitors at the bottom of the home page).</p> <p>Must sign the visitor log upon entry.</p> <p>Does not need to be vaccinated for entry, but it is strongly recommended that visitors are immunized.</p> <p>Note that the residence will not facilitate outdoor visits except in exceptional cases.</p>
Education and guidelines	<p>Prior to their first visit as a ECP, the home provides training on how to safely provide direct care, including putting on and taking off required PPE and hand hygiene.</p>	<p>Has access to this visiting policy.</p>	<p>Has access to this visiting policy.</p>	<p>Has access to this visiting policy.</p>

Categories	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Essential Care Partner</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Compassionate Grounds</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Support Worker</u>	GENERAL VISITOR
Retraining on guidelines	Ongoing training resources will be shared with the ECPs via email and must be regularly reviewed.			
Number of Visitors	There are no limits to the number of visitors. If the home area is on outbreak or the resident is isolating, only two ECPs at a time is permitted.	There are no limits to the number of visitors.	There are no limits to the number of visitors.	There are no limits to the number of visitors.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Visitors: The home is responsible to provide a procedure mask, gloves, gowns and eye protection as required for all indoor visits.	Must always follow the requirements posted at the entrance regarding PPE guidance. These may change frequently. May share a meal or beverage with a resident in a designated communal area.			
Visiting hours	No schedule or limit on the length or frequency of visits, however, it is appreciated that visits end by 9 p.m. if the resident is not dying or very ill, and that ECPs of residents in two-bed room consider the well-being of the roommate with the length of their visits.	Every resident who is dying or who is very ill has the right to have family and friends present 24 hours per day. The home can, at its discretion, schedule or manage the frequency of visits by essential visitors who are not ECPs.	The home can, at its discretion, schedule or manage the frequency of visits by essential visitors who are not DCPs.	There is no limit to the length or frequency of visits. For the well-being of the residents, quiet hours are between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.
Age Visitors are asked to consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate	Must be over 16 years.	No age limit		
Resident is isolating (on precautions), or the home is on outbreak or suspect outbreak. During an outbreak and/or suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local public health unit will provide direction on visitors to the	Can visit, two at a time, during an outbreak or when resident is on precautions (local public health may provide further direction on specific situation). Must wear a mask and any other PPE required.	Visits can continue during an outbreak. Public health may provide further direction on specific situations.	Public health may provide further direction on specific situations.	General visitors are not allowed during an outbreak or if the resident is under contact and droplets precautions, except for isolation following an admission.

Categories	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Essential Care Partner</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Compassionate Grounds</u>	ESSENTIAL VISITOR <u>Support Worker</u>	GENERAL VISITOR
home, depending on the specific situation. ***N95 masks and Face shields may be required and will be distributed, as needed.				

Appendix B

Designation Form – Essential Care Partners

DEFINITION Essential Care Partners (ECP)

An ECP is an individual who is designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision maker and is visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g., supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). Examples of care partners include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators. ECPs are distinct from casual “visitors.” Because they know their loved one best, they are uniquely attuned to subtle changes in their behaviour or status.

ECP VISITING

ECPs can visit the home without visiting time and frequency restrictions. Essential visitors (ECPs fall within this category of visitor) are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating, or the home is in an outbreak. During an outbreak, the local public health unit will provide direction on visitors to the home, depending on the specific situation.

ELIGIBILITY TO BE A ECP

The ECP must meet the criteria outlined in the definition above and must be over 16 years of age. It is generally expected that the ECP will spend at least five hours per week supporting the resident.

The ECP must participate in a training session and receive their ECP identification badge

The ECP must follow the rules and regulations of Bruyère Continuing Care.

The ECP must have received at least two doses of a Health Canada approved vaccine or have a ministry-provided medical exemption. If the ECP requires a medical exemption, they must contact the home’s management.

HOW TO DESIGNATE AN ECP?

The resident or SDM may designate essential care partners. The decision to designate an individual as a ECP is entirely the remit of the resident and/or their substitute decision maker and not the home.

The designation should be made in writing to the home using the form below.

A resident and/or their substitute decision maker may change a designation in response to a change in the: 1) Resident’s care needs that are reflected in the plan of care. 2) Availability of an essential care partner, either temporary (e.g., illness) or permanent. We ask that if a ECP changes for any of these reasons, it is for a minimum of a month.

Please refer to the Bruyère Long-Term Care Visiting Policy for additional information.

This information and policy are subject to change at any time upon direction from the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Designation Form **Essential** Care Partner (ECP)

Name of long-term care home: _____

Name of resident: _____

Name of person completing the form (if not the resident): _____

Relationship to the resident (indicate 'self' if resident completes): _____

I have read the information above and the Bruyère Long-Term Care Visiting Policy. I wish to designate the following ECPs.

	Name	Relationship to resident	Phone number	Email
1				
2				
3				
4				

Please indicate if these ECPs require a support person to assist them with communications, mobility or personal care.

Please send this form to ecp@bruyere.org via email or by mail (43 Bruyère St, Ottawa, ON, K1N 5C8).

Essential care partners will be contacted within three business days of receiving the form to schedule a training session.

Thank you!

APPENDIX C

[COVID-19 Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes.](#)

This document is an online provincial tool. If you require a printed copy, please contact us at sld-ltc@bruyere.org.