

# COVID-19

## INFORMATION UPDATE



May 20, 2020

**To:** Executive Directors & Physician Leads of Interior Divisions of Family Practice, Long Term Care Physicians, and IH Regional Medical Directors for Long Term Care

**From:** Dr. Douglas Smith, Executive Medical Director, Long Term Care, Palliative and End of Life Care, Medical Assistance in Dying

**Re:** COVID-19 Long-Term Care Update – MHO Order & Memos for LTC Visitor Exemptions and Screening & Transfers of Residents with Known or Suspected COVID-19

Long-term care (LTC) facilities are at high risk for spread of COVID-19 and related severe outcomes for residents. Subsequent to the April 19, 2020 memo to LTC physicians regarding COVID-19 Long Term Care and Resident Transfers, Interior Health's Medical Health Officers (MHO) published additional guidance for LTC facilities on May 8 and May 13.

The updated guidance scales back the requirement to seek approval from the MHO, and better streamlines resident transfers in and out of facilities, while ensuring care needs are being met and infection risks are identified and mitigated.

### **IH Chief Medical Health Officer Order and Memos for LTC**

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On May 8, Dr. Sue Pollock, Interior Health Interim Chief Medical Health Officer, issued an [order](#) and accompanying [memo](#) to IH LTC facility operators to provide greater clarity regarding allowable resident visits and take measures to further minimize risk for exposure.

On May 13, IH Medical Health Officers distributed the [MHO Requirements for Patient/Resident Inter-Facility Transfers \(updated and revised from April 18, 2020 memo\)](#) which provide greater clarity regarding revised requirements for LTC transfers.

Key changes are highlighted below. Please refer to the full memos for further details.

### **Exemptions and Screening for Persons Entering Long-term Care (Visitors)**

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- Enhanced screening of staff, contractors, and visitors per BCCDC guidance: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/long-term-care-facilities-assisted-living>
- Reporting to the MHO is required where staff/residents display
  - one (1) incidence of an influenza-like illness; or
  - two (2) cases of mild respiratory illness
- **Routine visits from family members and friends of residents are not permitted.**
- Virtual online visits and contact with family and friends are encouraged.
- Visitors are allowed only under the following circumstances:

- Where Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP) assesses resident as “end-of-life” (estimated weeks to months of life), in-person visits of family members or spiritual advisor are permitted – no exemption request required.
- Visits which the MRP identifies as paramount to resident care and well-being – exemption request required on a case-by-case basis.
- Requests for exemptions can be made via LTC facility staff.
- All visitors must:
  - Be asymptomatic and adhere to LTC staff screening protocols prior to each visit;
  - Wear appropriate PPE as per LTC staff direction; and
  - Visit only in the resident’s room.
- LTC facilities shall cancel or postpone indefinitely all group social activities and planned community social activities.

### **Transfers of Residents with Known or Suspected COVID-19**

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- Transfers of residents who are non-COVID-19 do NOT require MHO notice/approval.
- Notify the MHO and receive authorization for resident transfers only where:
  - Resident is a known or suspected COVID-19 infection
  - Resident had known contact with a COVID-19 case
  - Facility has a current COVID-19 outbreak
- In an emergent situation (e.g., having a stroke and full code), and where patient goals support transfer, immediate 911 transfer should occur with notice to MHO as soon as possible.
- Residents temporarily residing elsewhere (e.g., with family) may not return to a LTC facility with a declared outbreak of COVID-19 until the outbreak is declared over by MHO.
- Residents repatriated to a LTC facility will have twice daily fever and symptom checks for 14 days.

### **Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP) Key Roles and Responsibilities**

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Based on the new MHO order and memos, physicians who are MRP for residents of LTC are asked to ensure the following:

- Support identification of residents who are suspected or positive COVID-19
- Support early identification of facility COVID/respiratory outbreaks
- Identify “end-of-life” patients (weeks to months of life) to support family member visits
- Identify residents requiring essential care visitors (e.g., paramount to resident care and wellbeing) and help inform exemption applications for these visitors where applicable
- Ensure medically appropriate transfer of LTC residents including notification to and authorization by an MHO for residents with suspect or confirmed COVID-19
- Inform transferring facility and BC Ambulance in advance for COVID positive or suspect resident transfers

Please read the full [MHO Order](#), [LTC Visitor Exemptions Memo](#) and [Updated LTC Transfers Memo](#) for further details.

### **Any Questions?**

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Should you have questions, please send them to [medicalstaff@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:medicalstaff@interiorhealth.ca), or contact your Regional Medical Director for Long-term Care (see contacts below).

## Regional Medical Directors, Long-Term Care Contact Information

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IH Region	Medical Director for LTC	Phone	Email
IH East	Dr. Trevor Janz	250-352-1208	<a href="mailto:Trevor.Janz@interiorhealth.ca">Trevor.Janz@interiorhealth.ca</a>
IH West	Dr. Janet Bates	778-257-0365	<a href="mailto:Janet.Bates@interiorhealth.ca">Janet.Bates@interiorhealth.ca</a>
IH Central	Dr. Diana Peters	250-549-2722	<a href="mailto:DianePeters@yahoo.com">DianePeters@yahoo.com</a>

## Provincial and IH Orders and Memos for Long Term Care / Assisted Living

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- BC Provincial Health Officer – Guidance March 20: [LTC & AL Operators Guidance](#)
- BC Provincial Health Officer – Order March 27: [Movement Limitation of LTC Facility Staff](#)
- BC Provincial Health Officer – Order April 15: [LTC Facility Staff Assignment](#)
- IH April 19 Memo to Physicians: [COVID-19 Long-term Care & Client Transfers](#)
- IH Medical Health Officer Order May 8: [LTC Facilities within IH](#)
- IH Medical Health Officer Memo May 8: [Infection Control Order Exemptions for IH LTC](#)
- IH Medical Health Officer Updated Memo May 13: [MHO Requirements for Patient/Resident Inter-Facility Transfers \(updated and revised from April 18, 2020 memo\)](#)