

Update on Easing of Restrictions at Perley Health

Vaccination requirements continue

March 11, 2022 – Ottawa, ON

Earlier this week, the Ontario government announced the easing of COVID-19 restrictions that take effect on Monday, March 14. These changes focused, for the most part, on the easing of restrictions in areas outside of long-term care and other congregate living settings where vulnerable individuals reside.

The team at Perley Health is aware of these changes and changes announced for April. We are working diligently to prepare for these changes while balancing resident risks and the safety of our community.

Safety Protocols that Remain

- Essential Caregivers/Visitors are not permitted to remove their face mask for any reason.
- There is no eating or drinking in the presence of residents.
- Essential Caregivers/Visitors are not permitted in the Pub or the Cafeteria.

Keys to Stay Safe and Prevent COVID-19 Transmission

- Get vaccinated
- Wear a mask
- Practise good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Physical distance and
- Limit close contacts by avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces

Effective March 14, 2022, the changes listed in the COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario are the following:

Vaccination

As Ontario continues to relax public health restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the province has announced that effective March 14, 2022, vaccination of members of our community – including staff, Essential Caregivers, visitors and others -- will be governed by the policy of the individual home instead of government directive.

Perley Health is reviewing its policy to determine what changes, if any, are appropriate. The clinical evidence is clear that vaccination is safe and effective at protecting individuals from severe illness and death; however, it is also true that the severity of COVID-19 variants and their transmissibility amongst vaccinated populations are not set in stone. The recent Omicron wave has demonstrated both increased transmissibility (despite vaccination and boosters) and a lower risk of severe outcome (hospitalization and death) among vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

None of us can predict with confidence what the future holds, but we all hope for a return to a more normal life. Perley Health intends to prudently manage the risks of current and future forms of COVID-19 by paying close attention to clinical evidence, public health guidance and best practices, including compliance with any future directives.

At this time, we do not believe it is prudent to relax the requirement that all members of our community be fully vaccinated against COVID 19, as we do not know what variant(s) may arise

in the near term. As the clinical evidence suggests that the current Omicron variant is both highly transmissible and has a much lower risk of severe outcomes in both vaccinated and unvaccinated populations, we have decided that a third dose booster is strongly encouraged. Should clinical evidence, public health guidance and best practices, or future government directives warrant Perley Health re-imposing mandatory vaccine boosters in the future, we will not hesitate to do so to protect our staff, residents, tenants, and clients. We will circulate a revised COVID-19 vaccination policy once changes have been finalized.

Visiting

- All general visitors can resume visits. General visitors, with the exception of children under the age of 5, will need to follow the vaccination policy of Perley Health.
- The number of indoor visitors (including caregivers) per resident at a time increases from two to four.
 - For information on the Swab Clinic and operating hours, please visit the Perley Health website.
- Testing for outdoor visits will no longer be required. Limits on outdoor visits will be lifted and homes can return to their regular practices on use of their available outdoor spaces.
 - Perley Health is not offering scheduled outdoor visits at this time.

Resident Absences

- All residents may go on overnight temporary absences, regardless of vaccination status.
- Testing of residents returning from day or overnight absences at established intervals will continue to identify as early as possible any individual who may become infected with COVID-19 in order to reduce transmission in the home.

Gathering

- Although cohorting will no longer be required for social activities with the exception that this practice must be maintained for dining, Perley Health will continue to encourage physical distancing and cohort residents based on the buildings in which they reside to align with available space.
- At this time family participation to attend programming will be limited and only permitted if space permits.
- Ice cream in the Pub for residents will soon return with details to follow.
- Social group activities can be increased in size (more than 10); while larger social group activities where potential crowding can occur should continue to be avoided, and IPAC measures should continue to be followed by staff, residents and visitors to promote safety and wellbeing.

This message will be posted to the Perley Health website, and print versions will be available at the Main Entrance and in the Swab Clinic.