VISITOR POLICY

The policies in this section may be amended at any time according to updated guidance from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, pursuant to updated Ministry Guidance as indicated in Appendix A.

BACKGROUND

Rules for visitors to The Heritage Nursing Home 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 and maintaining their emotional well-being.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Safety – Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.

Emotional Well-Being – Allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

Equitable Access – All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

Flexibility – The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to take into account when setting home-specific policies.

Equality – Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the COVID-19 virus in determining whether visiting a long-term care is appropriate. (IF YOU ARE ILL WITH ANY OF THE SYMPTOMS RELATED TO COVID-19, PLEASE DO NOT VISIT THE NURSING HOME)

ESSENTIAL CAREGIVERS

Essential caregivers are individuals who are designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision maker (SDM) and are 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). Essential caregivers include family members, privately hired caregivers, paid companions and translators.

- The decision to designate an individual as an essential caregiver is at the discretion and remit of the resident and/or SDM. The home will not partake or interfere in this decision-making process.

- Limits to the number of essential caregivers per resident may change based on Ministry of Health directives.
- Essential caregivers may visit the resident at any time without an appointment.
- Essential caregivers must be at least 16 years of age.
- The resident and/or SDM may substitute the individuals who are designated as essential caregivers in response to changes in the resident's care needs that are reflected in the plan of care or to changes in the availability of a designated caregiver (temporary or permanent).
- Essential caregivers are the only type of visitors that are permitted when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic or when a LTCH is in outbreak; however, visiting under these circumstances is at the discretion and direction of the local Public Health Unit (PHU).
- If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic or if the home is in outbreak, a maximum of one (1) essential caregiver may visit the resident at a time.
- Essential caregivers will wear all required personal protective equipment (PPE) when interacting with a resident or resident's environment who is self-isolating or symptomatic. The home will provide all required PPE, which includes surgical/procedural masks, gowns, gloves and eye protection (e.g. face shield or goggles). Essential caregivers are not required to maintain physical distancing from the resident they are providing care to, but must maintain physical distancing from other residents, visitors and staff.

All caregivers prior to visiting any residents for the first time, and at least once every month thereafter, should verbally attest to the home that they have read/re-read the home's visitor policy.

The home will provide IPAC (infection prevention and control) training to caregivers that addresses how to safely provide direct care, including putting on and taking off required PPE, and hand hygiene. Essential caregivers are required to update this training on a yearly basis.

If you want to become a caregiver, you will need to submit a written request to: Huijing Chen hchen@heritagenursinghome.com

Essential caregivers **must** read and agree to comply with the following requirements:

- Must review The Heritage Nursing Home Visitors Policy, and stay up-to-date on this policy
- Must complete Infection Protection and Control (IPAC) training provided by The Heritage Nursing Home, and must update this training on a yearly basis.
- Must comply with current Heritage Nursing Home IPAC (Infection Prevention & Control) policies and protocols, including:
    - Universal masking and/or eye protection
    - PPE policy
    - Hand hygiene policy

- Any other policies that may be in effect (policies sometimes change or are updated)

Visitors who do not comply with the above process will be asked to leave the visit. Future visits may be discontinued.

To ensure a safe and secure environment for its residents, homes have the discretion to further restrict the number of visitors.

GENERAL VISITORS

General Visitors are individuals who are not essential visitors who are visiting a resident to provide non-essential services (e.g. social visits, family members or friends who are not providing care needs as outlined under essential caregivers).

- There is no age requirement for general visitors; however, general visitors under the age of 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (18 years of age or older) and must follow all infection prevention and control practices and precautions that are in place at the home. Children under the age of two years do not count towards the general visitor maximum.
- Limits to the number of general visitors who may visit may change based on Ministry of Health directives.
- Visits may take place only during posted visiting hours, and may last for up to 1 hour.
- If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic or if the home is in outbreak, general visitors are not permitted.

All general visitors must comply with current Heritage Nursing Home IPAC (Infection Prevention & Control) policies and protocols, including:

- Universal masking and/or eye protection
- PPE policy
- Hand hygiene policy
- Any other policies that may be in effect (policies sometimes change or are updated)

Virtual visits can be arranged by calling Program Manager at 416-461-8185 extension 40 or by emailing sgreenidge@heritagenursinghome.com

SCREENING & OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Both general visitors and essential caregivers are required to complete passive self-screening for signs and symptoms of infection/illness prior to each visit at the home. This includes self-assessing for the following symptoms:

- Fever and/or chills
- Cough or barking cough (croup)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy/congested nose
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
- Muscle aches/joint pain
- Shortness of breath
- Decreased or loss of smell or taste
- OR you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or someone who has any of the above symptoms

Individuals with any of the above symptoms are expected to delay their visit until they are feeling well.

When visiting during an outbreak, **essential caregivers** may be required to pass active screening prior to entering the facility, and may be asked to attest that they have no symptoms of illness.

FOOD, PERSONAL ITEMS & GIFTS

Visitors/caregivers may bring in food items or beverages for a resident so long as they are in sealed containers that can withstand being wiped down using high-level disinfectant.

Visitors/caregivers may bring in gifts or personal items for a resident so long as they can withstand being wiped down using high-level disinfectant, or can be put directly in the laundry.

The home does not permit visits with family pets at this time.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This policy may be update by The Heritage Nursing Home at any time.

Any non-adherence to this protocol will be the basis for discontinuation of visits or care giving access. The Administrator will make the final determination and the visitor/caregiver will be notified of the decision in writing.