

Essential Health Visits in Long-term Care

<p>Site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term Care Island-Wide ○ Affiliates & Owned and Operated 	<p>Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Facility Leadership & Staff; Regulated Health Care Providers • Indications: Essential Health Visits
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Need to know:

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) and BC Center for Disease Control (BC CDC) have released policies and updated guidelines in prevention and management of COVID-19 in Long-term Care Facilities (LTCF) including those for visitation. In light of ongoing outbreaks in the province and the risk to the health and safety of our residents, we must remain vigilant and restrict unnecessary persons into our facilities.
- Many services have been re-started in facilities; however, there remain a number of health providers (i.e. acupuncture, registered massage therapy, dental hygienists, chiropractors, foot care nurses, and optometrists) who are limited to essential health visits. Routine (i.e. ongoing surveillance or maintenance) related visits are not currently being recommended.

Decision Making: What is Considered an Essential Health Visit?

In order to support sites in decision-making related to resident health and safety, prior to allowing health related visits (either on-site or off-site), the following questions should be considered and discussed with the care team to determine if the visit is essential:

- Can the appointment be done virtually **OR** the health issue(s) be managed by the primary care provider (Family Physician or Nurse Practitioner) or by an existing staff member?
- Would the visit enable resolution of an acute and/or urgent episodic medical issue? (e.g. worsening wounds, foot care which if left untreated would result in infection or further burden of care, broken tooth)
- Would the service reduce the immediate or very near-future need for an ER visit or hospitalization?
- Would delaying the appointment lead to increased morbidity and/or serious harm for the resident?
- Is health care provider a regulated professional? For non-regulated professionals, requests need to be forwarded to Island Health LTC director to review with Infection Control & Medical Health Officer.
- How does the provider plan to limit risk to the facility (i.e. COVID-19 Safety plan).



***NB: Any residents who attend non-essential visits, will require 14-day isolation as per the [Long-term Care Access Guideline](#)**

COVID-19 Safety Plan

- All health care providers who are providing essential service on-site would ***be required to submit a COVID-19 safety plan to be reviewed by the Director of Care or Site Manager and approved prior to allowing them on site.***
- All health care providers and contracted persons would be subject to LTCF restrictions including COVID-19 screening and adhering to PPE recommendations.
- If the contracted provider is deemed essential by the care team, the decision making needs to be documented and communicated to the resident and/or family.

Site & Health Care Provider Responsibilities and Considerations

Roles of the essential health provider and facility staff are outlined below for both off-site and on-site visits:

OFF-SITE ESSENTIAL HEALTH VISITS

- The facility leadership will review the COVID-19 safety plan of the site where the health visit will occur
- Resident will be screened as per [COVID-19 Response Protocol: LTCF](#) pre- and post visit and will only attend if no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. negative screen and normal temperature)
- The receiving site will try to accommodate residents as first visit of the day after enhanced cleaning
- Transportation Guidelines must be followed:



COVID-19 Long-term Care, Assisted Living & Congregate Housing Transport Infection Control Requirements

Resident

- 1) Be screened by Nurse or greeter prior to trip and prior to returning to unit/home
- 2) Comply with strict hand hygiene: Soap and water for at least 20 seconds (required when hands visibly soiled) and/or Hand sanitizer
- 3) Wear a surgical mask during transport
- 4) Comply with using transport as mechanism to get to/from medical appointments; must not ask transport to stop off in between trips for social or other purposes (i.e. cannot stop for coffee or to shop)

Transport Service

1. Pre-screen calls to all passengers prior to transport
2. Must transport only 1 resident at a time, unless from same facility can transport up to 2 resident at a time maximizing distance seated
3. Seat the client and escort (if there is one) at the furthest distance from the driver in order to observe a 2 metre distance
4. If weather permits, keep the window open to improve ventilation
5. Ensure vehicle is cleaned with any high touch surfaces (i.e. *Drivers station, Door handles, Overhead grab handles/railings, Windows control buttons/handles, Lock buttons, Seat belts/buckles, Seat control buttons, Seat backs, Center console, Arm rests, Credit/debit card machine*) are being sanitized with appropriate disinfectant, prior to and after resident transfer.

Use a **disinfectant** that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively. Examples of cleaning and disinfecting agents: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_MOH_BCCDC_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf

Driver

1. Self-Assess with BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool Prior to arriving at facility
2. Be screened by Greeter with [Island Health LTC Screening protocol](#)
3. Limit presence in patient care areas, ideally restricting driver to stay in lobby or outside unless resident requires stretcher (attempt to limit presence on unit to <15 minutes; complying with physical distancing of 6-ft)
4. Comply with strict hand hygiene: Soap and water for at least 20 seconds (required when hands visibly soiled) and/or Hand sanitizer
5. Wear surgical mask when in contact with resident

ON SITE ESSENTIAL HEALTH VISITS

Essential Contracted Provider will:

- Call the facility 24 hours in advance of appointment to determine there is no active outbreak
- Ensure an appointment time has been provided by facility in order to facilitate visit
- Self-Screen with the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#) and cancel appointment if screen is positive
- Book all appointments at the beginning of the day for residents. Any appointments for persons who are COVID-19 positive or close contacts should be scheduled at the end-of day after a facility visit.
- Comply with screening by greeter including temperature check
- Provide the greeter with up to date contact information for contact tracing purposes, should it be required for Public Health Officials
- Perform strict hand hygiene as per [4 moments for hand hygiene](#)

COVID-19: Guideline

- Comply with PPE guidance as outlined for care providers in Long-term Care in Island Health's [PPE DURING COVID-19 Pandemic](#) guidance document
- Adhere to physical distancing recommendations of 2m at all times unless otherwise indicated by medical appointment
- Ensure appropriate disinfecting (with hospital grade disinfectant) of common touch surfaces before and after each visit
- Any instruments utilized must follow sterilization as per reprocessing guideline
- Leave the facility immediately after the appointment adhering to appropriate doffing of PPE and hand hygiene
- Follow all guidelines as per your professional college association

Site Staff:

- Establish appropriate location for appointment
- Greeter will screen health care provider as per [COVID-19 Long-term Care Facility \(LTCF\): Screening by Greeter](#) including obtaining current contact information in the event of outbreak where Public Health Official requires it
- Ensure contracted provider has appropriate PPE
- Accompany the essential contract provider to the pre-arranged appointment location
- Monitor the essential health provider donning and doffing PPE ensuring adherence to infection prevention and control guidelines. Supervising visit is not required.
- Ensure appointment location is appropriately cleaned following the visit

Persons/Groups Consulted: Medical Health Officer, Infection Prevention & Control, LTC Leadership

Resources

BC Center for Disease Control & BC Ministry of Health. (2020). [Infection prevention and control interim guidance for long-term care and assisted living facilities](#)

Fraser Health (2020). [Long-term Care, Assisted Living COVID-19 Resource Toolkit](#)

Provincial Infection Control Network of British Columbia (PICNet). (2016). [Reminder: the 4 moments for hand hygiene](#)