

Visitor Types at Congregate Living Settings

Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services

All visitors will be actively screened prior to their visit. If they do not pass screening, the visit will be postponed as per screening protocols.

Infection Prevention and Control precautions that in place at the group home must be followed by all types of visitors.

For any visits and/or visitor types that do not fall within the definitions provided, Sunbeam will perform a situation-specific risk assessment to guide its decision-making. The risk assessment will include consideration of risks to, and rights of persons served, staff providing the supports, and families and/or substitute decision makers of persons-served, as well as local, provincial and federal emergency orders, directives and guidelines regarding COVID-19 pandemic protocols.

Types of Visitors

Essential Visitors

An essential visitor includes:

- a. An individual (typically a service provider) performing an essential or urgent support service (ie. food delivery, inspector, Sunbeam maintenance, Sunbeam information systems, local utility urgent response provider, mobile health care services, etc)

Or,

- b. An individual (typically a Substitute Decision Maker or family member of the person-served) who may provide unique support to the person-served which cannot be provided by the organization's staff, in circumstances wherein:
 - i. There has been an immediate behavioural or medical decline in the person-served, and/or
 - ii. The person-served is critically ill or determined to be palliative, and/or
 - iii. The person-served has been identified as at risk of harm to self or others in which all other approaches have been exhausted to support the person-served (for example phone calls, skype visits, window visits, outdoor visits) and self-harming behaviours or aggression to others is continuing and/or increasing, and/or
 - iv. The legal rights of the person-served may be put at risk, and/or
 - v. The person-served requires assistance with caregiving activities of daily living (such as feeding assistance or bathing assistance) which the organization's staff is unable to provide (due to unique challenges such as: staffing shortage, behavioural issues) and which may only be uniquely provided by the proposed essential visitor

Consideration is always given to the physical and emotional health, wellness and safety of the person- served, in the context of local pandemic conditions.

During an outbreak and/or a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, essential visits may continue as guided by Public Health or other Government advice and/or the organization’s assessment of risk.

Should such visits occur, the essential visitor will be provided appropriate PPE to safeguard their visit and the visitor will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner aligning with the pandemic precautions required of the organization’s staff (appropriate PPE, hand hygiene, physical distancing, respecting the direction and decision of the most senior supervisory staff on duty). If visiting a person- served who is in isolation, the essential visitor will also wear gloves, gown, medical mask, and eye protection. Education will be provided on how to put on and take off PPE safely.

At all times, the visitor is expected to immediately report to staff any breach of pandemic precautions they may have experienced during the visit, and the visitor must respect the resulting direction and decisions of the most senior supervisory staff on duty. Such visitors must not interfere with or disrupt the safe operation of the home by their actions or behavior.

If an individual (typically the SDM or family member) is struggling to accept and adhere to the pandemic precautions and guidelines, but the person-served is not demonstrating any significant adverse impacts to their safety, health and wellbeing, then the inability of a the family member or SDM to cope is not, on its own, sufficient to meet the definition of an essential visitor. In such situations, the family member or SDM is encouraged to contact Sunbeam for information and assistance about resources that may be available in the community to support their ability to cope. We continue to work with government and health authorities, our clients, their families, and our staff to consider creative, but safe options to support the family bonds and community connections that are more important than ever. Ensuring the safety and wellness of our persons served and the front-line staff who support them is paramount.

Essential visitors will be actively screened prior to their visit. If they do not pass screening, the visit will be postponed as per screening protocols.

➤ Question:

Is a family home visit (same day return) considered an “essential visit” simply because it may involve an “essential visitor”?

➤ Answer:

No. The visit types permitted by under the definition of essential visitor include: indoor visits at the group home site and outdoor visits at the group home site.

➤ Question:

What are some examples of an “essential visit”?

➤ Answer:

As above, an indoor visit at the group home site, with an essential visitor, or an outdoor visit at the group home site with an essential visitor.

If the person served must attend an essential appointment (doctor’s appointment, dentist appointment, other medical / treatment / wellbeing appointment for example) and staff accompaniment is not available, then an essential visitor accompaniment is appropriate.

Similarly, if the essential visitor provides caregiving supports (such as feeding assistance, bathing assistance, therapy, rehabilitation) which staff are unable to provide, and which are best provided at the family home or elsewhere offsite in a safe manner with appropriate precautions, then this may be considered an essential visit.

An essential overnight absence is also considered to be an “essential visit”. An overnight absence (eg. to a family home) is an essential visit if it is considered necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights of the person served.

Friendly Visitors (non-essential)

A friendly visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- a. To provide non-essential services
- b. For social reasons (ie. family member or friend)

During an outbreak and/or a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, friendly visits are postponed until public health declares the outbreak or investigation over.

Visiting Time and Frequency Guidelines

Visit Type	Maximum duration of each visit	Physical Distancing	Maximum frequency of visits
Essential Visitor	Refer to Congregate Care Setting guidelines and precautions as provided at: www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/covid-19-information		
Friendly Visitor			
Same-Day Family Home Visits			

* Normal precautions during pandemic period. If local conditions necessitate a higher level of precautions, the types, duration and frequency of visits may vary based on assessed risk.

References:

Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services: COVID-19 Guidance for MCCSS-funded and Licensed Congregate Living Settings (July 2021)

The Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act and relevant regulations/orders.

Local Public Health Unit direction to address local circumstances (e.g. community spread).

Ministry of Health (MOH) COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations

Public Health Ontario COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings

Public Health Ontario: Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings

Chief Medical Officer of Health. *Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007. Issued under Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) R.S.O. 1990, C.H.7.* Oct 14, 2020.

Public Health Ontario. *Planning for respiratory virus outbreaks in congregate living settings.* Oct 13, 2020.

Public Health Agency of Canada. *Update on COVID-19 in Canada: Epidemiology and Modelling.* Oct 9, 2020.

Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services. *Second Wave Memo to Congregate Care Providers.* Oct 2, 2020.



Public Health Ontario. *Resources for Families and Visitors in Long Term Care, Retirement Homes and other Congregate Settings*. Sept 30, 2020.

Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services. *MCCSS Visitor's Guidelines 2.0: Re-Opening of Congregate Living Settings*. Sept 3, 2020.

Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services: Sector Pandemic Planning Initiative. *Suggested Action Plans & Considerations Regarding Essential Visitors to Group Homes*. June 3, 2020.

Public Health Ontario. *COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings*. May 23, 2020.