

The Designated Caregiver vs The General Visitor

September 17, 2020

Since the change in the visitor policy effective September 15, 2020, there has been some confusion around what the changes mean for those people who wish to visit the Retirement Home. The Ontario government has introduced some changes and clarifications around different types of visitors to Retirement Homes, including general visitors and caregivers.

For general visitors, who are defined as someone who is not an essential visitor, and visits to provide non-essential services, for social reasons, or a prospective resident, most things remain unchanged except an added provision to review the home's visitor policy and several public health documents and videos prior to visiting.

The introduction of a designated caregiver in the Ontario government's response strategy now allows each resident to designate up to 2 individuals who can come into the home to provide direct care. Examples provided include feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making. In order to become a designated caregiver, you must notify the community in writing, define the intent and purpose of the direct care being provided, as well as provide the approximate time this care will be provided. This will become part of the resident's care planning process. The designated caregiver may change over time based on the needs of the resident or availability of the caregiver, but this information must be provided to the community. There will be a list of designated caregivers who are permitted in the home that will be reviewed during the active screening process.

To become a designated caregiver, please complete the form already sent to you or available on the website and arrange for a call with the Executive Director or Director of Wellness in the home to further discuss details and requirements. It is expected that designated caregivers will have a negative COVID-19 test within the last 14 days and no subsequent positive test, and caregivers must attest to having completed the required education prior to visiting.