

May 8, 2020

To: All Interior Health Region Long-Term Care Facilities

Re: Infection Control Order Exemptions

On March 27, 2020, the Chief Medical Health Officer (CMHO) issued the Class Order – COVID-19 Infection Control Practices in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF). Section 1(c) of this Order restricts access to any and all visitors to minimize the risk of the introduction of COVID-19 into facilities and allow staff to focus on caring for residents rather than screening and monitoring visitors.

Routine visits from family members and friends of residents are not allowed. Virtual online visits and contact with family and friends should be encouraged and supported by LTC facilities. In exceptional circumstances, visitors are allowed without an exemption as described in section c(i) of the Order and by applying for an exemption in section c(ii). Section c(i) allows in-person visits with persons in care who have been assessed at end of life. Immediate family members and the spiritual advisor therefore **do not require an exemption** for visiting.

Exemption is not Required Under 1(c)(i) of the Order

For residents who the most responsible physician (MRP) has assessed as being at 'end-of-life' (estimated as weeks to months of life as per the BC Center for Excellence in Palliative Care) in-person visits of a limited number of immediate family member(s) or spiritual advisor can occur on an ongoing or one-time basis. The LTCF must follow the criteria outlined by the IH MHO, which includes ensuring any designated family member/visitor is asymptomatic prior to any visit, wears appropriate PPE, and limits their visit to the specific resident's room (criteria noted on Infection Control Order Exemptions memo, May 8, 2020).

In this context, **immediate family members** may include persons who are very meaningful to the resident even if not related by blood or marriage.

The following table, extracted from the BC Centre for Palliative Care, helps interpret the term **End of Life**.

Community Health and Services Centre
505 Doyle Avenue
Kelowna BC V1Y 0C5
Web: interiorhealth.ca

Sue Pollock, MD FRCPC
Interim Chief Medical Health Officer
Telephone: (250) 469-7070 ext. 12791 Fax: (250) 868-7826
E-Mail: sue.pollock@interiorhealth.ca

End of Life	Last Days/Hours Care
Estimated weeks to months of life.	Estimated final week of life.
Goals for end of life care are guided by the person's known wishes and priorities.	Last days and last hours of care are those precious moments when the person is still alive and time is short.
Care remains active and focuses on easing pain and other discomfort and supporting living well.	Goals are to provide pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual care, and continue to honour the expressed wishes of the person throughout the dying process. This includes providing support to family and loved ones.
Providing emotional and spiritual support for the person, family and friends as death draws near is very important.	

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/PalliativeCare/Pages/WhatIsPalliative.aspx>

Visitors who do not need an exemption must comply with the expectations in Appendix A.

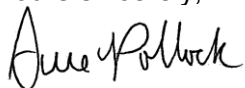
Exemption is Required Under 1(c)(ii) of the Order

The restrictions in this order to essential visits allows health authorities and operators some implementation flexibility to ensure vital resident needs can continue to be met, while still applying a serious lens. There is a recognition that, at this time, stricter limitations on visitors has the potential to increase anxiety for residents and families, as well as put additional pressure on health care workers where families provide invaluable support with activities of daily living and non-clinical care to support their loved ones. Where an appropriate safety plan can be implemented to manage health hazard risks, the Order includes a provision for LTCFs to apply for an exemption to section 1(c).

Visits considered paramount to resident care and well-being, to ensure care is provided as set out in a care plan prior to the order may be allowed. Where it is felt that other situations exist in which an exemption to this class Order should be granted as essential to maintaining the health and well-being of a resident in care, then a request for exemption can be made for one-time or ongoing visitations. The LTCF should make the request to LicensingDirect@interiorhealth.ca using the Infection Control Practices Exemption Request Form. The Licensing Direct inbox is monitored after hours and on weekends. Urgent requests may be discussed with the MHO by contacting the MHO on call at 1-866-457-5648.

If you have any questions regarding this order and the exemption process please call Licensing Direct at 1.877.980.5118 or email at LicensingDirect@interiorhealth.ca.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Sue Pollock, FRCPC
Interim Chief Medical Health Officer
SP/Is
Attachment

Appendix A - Compliance

The Long Term Care Facility confirms compliance with the following:

- The LTCF will screen the exempted person at each time of entry using the greeter's script. If the exempted person does not pass the screening questions in the greeter's script, the LTCF will not allow admission to the LTCF.
- The LTCF will provide education and training on infection control processes, and applicable policies and procedures.
- The exempted person will meet the expectations for the provision of required PPE.
- The LTCF will assess the exempted person's comprehension and implementation of infection control measures, PPE use and all facility policies.
- The LTCF will monitor the adherence with the infection control measures and all expectations as set out in policy.
- The operator will escort the exempted person to and from the specified room and ensure that the exempted person is confined to that area and does not engage in activities outside of the approved exemption.
- The exempted person has access only to a prescribed person in care in a confined, single occupancy room.