

## Covid-19 Update: Adult Services

Please be advised, on August 28/20, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provided agencies with an update to requirements pertaining to people who live in congregate living settings, as follows:

**“Short-Stay Absences and Outings”** may now occur, as per the preferences of people supported and “within reasonable restrictions that safeguard both residents and staff.” For people supported who wish to leave their home to access the community, visits friends, attend appointments, go shopping, etc., the following requirements must be met:

- People supported must pass an active screening questionnaire that screens for signs and symptoms of and potential exposure to COVID-19 every time they re-enter the congregate living sites. It’s important to note, should family members bring their family member back to the congregate setting and the person fails the screening questionnaire, the family would be responsible for “caring for” the person until such time Public Health gives the go ahead for the person to return back to the congregate setting. This could result in periods of time exceeding 14 days.
- People supported must perform proper hand hygiene upon exit and entry of congregate living settings, as well as maintain hand hygiene (e.g. using hand sanitizer regularly including entry/exit of buildings/spaces) while in the community and after touching shared surfaces or others.
- When entering indoor spaces or when within 2 metres/6 feet of others, people supported are to wear face coverings/masks (cloth masks are acceptable). In addition, physical distancing practices should be encouraged and adherence to any other local public health unit advice related to local conditions and requirements.
- As much as possible, people supported should avoid crowded indoor places and interactions with multiple people. Masks should only be removed indoors to eat or drink.

**“Essential Overnight Absences”** is defined by MCCSS as “necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights, of a resident.” Should a person supported partake in an essential overnight absence, upon their return to the congregate living setting, they are to follow enhanced precautions for 14 days post essential overnight visit, including:

- People supported must pass an active screening questionnaire that screens for signs and symptoms of and potential exposure to COVID-19 every time they re-enter the congregate living sites. It’s important to note, should family members bring their family member back to the congregate setting and the person fails the screening questionnaire, the family would be responsible for “caring for” the person until such time Public Health gives the go ahead for the person to return back to the congregate setting. This could result in periods of time exceeding 14 days.
- Only receive outdoor visitors during the 14 days (visitors are still expected to book visits and follow all the current protocols in place)
- Monitor for symptoms
- Avoid using common areas; however, if a common area can’t be avoided, the person supported must use a face covering/mask
- Limit contact with other people supported
- Only participate in group activities if physical distancing is maintained (i.e. 2 metres/6 feet) and the use of a face covering/mask

- Practice proper hand hygiene by washing hands often (using soap and water or alcohol based sanitizer)
- Adhere to respiratory etiquette
- Continue to follow appropriate physical distancing guidelines

To summarize, the Ministry is now saying people supported may access the community and partake in overnight visits. However, it is important to note, the Ministry is also stressing restrictions are necessary to safeguard people supported and staff. Staff will be talking to their Supervisors about individual scenarios prior to people accessing the community. Proceeding with caution is advised, as experts are predicting a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave. Each congregate location will be considering the needs of the people who reside at the location and the potential for levels of compromise

Resource Links:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/docs/MCCSS-Re-Opening-Short-Stay-Overnight-Stays-EN.pdf>

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-action-plan-protecting-vulnerable-ontarians>

[http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_congregate\\_living\\_guidance.pdf](http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_congregate_living_guidance.pdf)

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