

COVID-19 Update

	Outbreaks	Ont. cases	Deaths	LTC deaths	% LTC deaths
August 18	12	40,870	2,793	1,847	66.1%
September 15	20	45,383	2,872	1,854	64.6%
October 19	87	65,896	3,053	1,979	64.8%
November 18	103	99,372	3,443	2,189	63.6%

Deaths in Ontario LTC homes now surpass 2,000, although the proportion of COVID-19 deaths in LTC is less; 619 residents currently have COVID-19, with 15 new deaths reported over the past day. Affected homes are predominantly in red zones. With the surge of community cases, more staff test positive, increasing the number of LTC outbreaks. An active COVID-19 outbreak indicates that the home has at least one lab confirmed case of COVID-19 in a resident or staff, and the local public health unit or the home has declared an outbreak.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19#section-0>

The new framework categorizes Ontario public health regions into five levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Lockdown being a measure of last and urgent resort. Protecting residents, staff and visitors from the risk of COVID-19 remains a paramount priority. The Ministry of LTC updated guidance on surveillance testing in LTC yesterday. The Updated Long-Term Care Sector Surveillance Testing Strategy is attached to this update.

Effective Monday, November 23, 2020, the guidance for testing staff and visitors is:

- Testing of staff and volunteers should continue every two weeks for homes located in public health unit regions in the Green and Yellow levels.
- Weekly testing of staff and volunteers should be implemented for homes located in public health unit regions in the Orange, Red or Lockdown levels. This applies to staff and volunteers as defined in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007.
- Visitors, or essential caregivers, in Orange, Red and Lockdown must provide proof of a negative COVID19 test result in the past week and verbally attest that they have not subsequently tested positive prior to visiting. This includes support workers who provide direct care to residents, unless the support worker requires immediate access to the home in an emergency situation. Support workers who do not provide direct care to residents will verbally attest to having received a negative COVID19 test result in the past two weeks, and not subsequently tested positive.
- Proof of a negative COVID-19 test result may be demonstrated by providing the home the results of the test (e.g. printout or on a mobile device showing the individual's name, test date and result).

“LTC homes are responsible for supporting residents in receiving visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19.” The Visiting Policy, November 16, is also attached. These remain the guidance for homes in the Green and Yellow levels.

Routine screening of staff, visitors and contractors, including physicians, is essential to protect residents in LTC, especially in the Orange and Red communities. It is difficult to curb the spread of the virus in long-term care homes without vigorous testing. “If we were to screen people coming into long-term care twice a week instead of every two weeks with a test that’s appropriate, we would drop the death rate,” says Dr. Bob Bell, a former hospital chief executive officer and deputy health minister in Ontario. In addition to the frequency of testing, the timely reporting of results is crucial. British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba do not require routine, surveillance testing of staff in long-term care homes, missing opportunities to detect the coronavirus before an outbreak is declared. Monitoring residents for symptoms fails to detect the virus in many elderly asymptomatic people afflicted with COVID-19.

[Absence of Standard Protocols for COVID-19, G&M, Nov 17](#)

ONTARIO LONG TERM CARE CLNICIANS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, November 26, 2020

The annual meeting of OLTCC is usually held at the annual in-person conference, outside of the accredited program. Practical Pearls in LTC became a virtual conference this year and so the AGM is scheduled for Thursday November 26, 5:00 – 6:00 PM. Members will have received the notice of meeting, agenda and minutes of the 2019 AGM. Usual items on the agenda include reports from the President, Treasurer and OMA. Four of twelve Board members are elected annually. Nominations closed on November 6. As usual, the meeting will conclude with the Members Forum, allowing members to ask question and give input for the organization.

Questions and enquires about the meeting can be directed to office@oltcc.ca

OLTCC is a not-for-profit organization representing physicians in LTC. Our members includes nurse practitioners and pharmacists in LTC. The Vision is *all Ontarians in LTC will receive excellent care*. Ontario LTC Physicians, was originally created as a charitable organization over 40 years ago. In 2016, the OLTCP Board created OLTCC, a not-for-profit, in order to provide greater advocacy and education. OLTCP continued until this year, providing educational grants for the Practical Pearls in LTC and the Medical Director Course.



OLTCP 2015-16 Board of Directors. Standing: Hugh Boyd, Julie Auger (Secretary), Jobin Varughese, Stephen Ng, Ross Johnston. Sitting: Sid Feldman, Andrea Moser (Past President), Evelyn Williams (President), Fred Mather (Vice President), Ramesh Zacharias (Treasurer)