



December 17, 2020

Dear family and friends.

A change in restrictions was announced today by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Premier. We were pleased to learn of the adjustments to visiting regulations within long-term care. This is an exciting prospect especially considering the time of year.

We are challenged by the limits we have with staffing this time of year; Christmas vacations were approved weeks ago which leaves us scrambling. The other barrier, which is more significant, is the physical space within our building. All visitors must practice physical distancing. Despite these issues, we will do our best to get as many visitors in over the next week.

There are two categories of visitors.

Designated Caregivers

A Designated Caregiver is a specific type of visitor that is a partner in care, who provides essential support for a resident's physical, mental and emotional well-being. A Designated Caregiver is a family member and/or support individual who has a clearly established pattern of involvement in providing the resident's care, supporting the resident's emotional well-being, health, or quality of life prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, (or prior to admission to Saint Vincent's) whether the support was provided in the facility, or in the community, either in person or at a distance (for example, providing emotional support via telephone). Designated Caregivers may perform tasks that:

- Assist with mobility, feeding and personal care;
- Assist with communication for persons with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments;
- Support a resident's mental health and emotional well-being, for example providing support to maintain cognitive function, reduce anxiety, agitation or distress in residents, or
- Support a resident's participation in indoor/outdoor visits or social activities at the Facility as well as accompanying them on off-site medical/dental visits.
- Designated Caregivers, must attend a short training session prior to the first visit. We will only have someone available for the education sessions next week until Wednesday. If you are a designated caregiver who has not yet been in, please call to make an appointment.

Beginning Monday, December 21st, each resident can assign two caregivers. Only one caregiver may visit at a time. In order to allow more freedom with these visitors, we are temporarily lifting the need to book your designated caregiver visit. You can choose the time and day and length of visit and both caregivers can visit on the same day (just not together). We do ask that you leave 7pm. It is important that the two caregivers arrange between themselves to avoid two people arriving at the same time to visit.

We will evaluate the change later in the week in hope it is something we can continue but it is contingent on our caregivers abiding by the Public Health Guidelines specifically in relation to masking and remaining in the resident room.

Designated caregivers are chosen by the resident and substitute decision maker. If you are unclear with whether you fall under this category, please ask. Anyone who has not been in as a designated caregiver must be trained. Call to book an important for your first visit to ensure you receive the necessary information.

Indoor Visitors

Appointments will be required for all indoor visits. Visits will occur in the afternoon, Monday to Friday over the next two weeks. Two visitors may visit at a time. Designated caregivers are asked to remain in the resident room or to leave the facility while the Windsor Room visit is held.

Depending on the volume of indoor visits requested we may be able to allow multiple Windsor Room visits but we need to start accepting bookings before making that decision. Let Kathy know if this is something you are interested in.

We would like to remind visitors, both our current designated caregivers and those returning to visiting, of the guidelines that remain in place. These are vital to protect our employees, residents and visitors.

- **Masks are required for your entire visit.** They can not be removed for any reason. Unfortunately, this means that visitors can not eat or drink anything while they are at Saint Vincent's Nursing Home.
- You can drop off items for residents, but they will continue to be quarantined prior to distribution. The deadline for accepting Christmas presents is December 18th in order to allow us time to label, quarantine and arrange for the delivery. Please do not bring items with you during visits.
- You will be screened when you enter the building. This will include asking you if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 and you will need to have your temperature checked. If you have even one mild symptom, please err on the side of caution; stay home and reschedule your visit.
- **Designated Caregiver visits with your loved ones must take place in their rooms only.** Maintaining physical distancing is very difficult with the size of our hallways and dining rooms and is compounded by residents who are not maintain the 6 feet between themselves and others. We need you to maintain the public health directives.
- It is our nature to chat, especially when we have been apart for a while, but we ask that you go directly to the resident's room when you visit. Stopping to talk in the hallways with staff and other residents must be avoided.

- Physical contact must be minimal. Designated care givers can be in close contact only if assisting with care tasks and other visitors can only give a quick hug but otherwise must maintain a physical distance.
- Unless the designated caregiver is providing assistance with care, they must maintain a physical distance of 2 m and both caregivers and visitors may only give a short hug or handshake
- There are no off-site visits at this time.

I know this is not as open as Dr. Strang announced but within the confines of life at Saint Vincent's we hope you understand the necessity.

Everyone is making adjustments this year in how we gather and celebrate. A limit of 10 people in a house is forcing families to pick who and when they get together with others. But, despite the limitations, we still get the gather, albeit in smaller groups. And, we continue to be COVID free.

You have been so patient with us and continue to be as we search for the best way forward for Saint Vincent's,

From my family to yours, best wishes for a safe, joy filled holiday. I look forward to seeing you in 2021.

Angela Berrette
Executive Director

