



March 15, 2020

Message from RHRA CEO and Registrar regarding COVID-19 Response

Dear Colleague,

We're writing to share an update on how RHRA is responding to the outbreak of COVID-19, as well as how we plan to approach any future decisions as the situation develops.

We will always act in the best interests of seniors living in retirement homes – and while we know it's important for you to focus on delivering care to residents, we will always balance this with our responsibility to check that the safety of seniors is maintained. I thank you for all that you have already done, and your continued effort and diligence in this shared objective.

This situation is evolving quickly, which may mean we have to change what we do and how we do it. We have given much thought to how we prioritize our work, and in particular, our collective focus on the task at hand.

To this end, the RHRA will be deferring our routine inspections on a temporary basis, however continue to focus on complaint, mandatory report and compliance inspections. We will make every effort to limit the need to enter retirement homes for those inspections we must conduct and when it can't be avoided, we will of course take every precaution in line with the recommendations of Public Health. We are also taking significant precautions with our inspections staff recognizing that they may visit multiple locations.

In addition, the RHRA will take the following approach to our implementation of the legislation and regulation during the COVID-19 situation. We will use guidance from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer

of Health with respect to how long these measures are in place and whether any further changes in our approach are required:

Section	Area	RHRA Practice
A 64	Hiring Staff	<p>Allow new hires to begin work with an Offense Declaration and with the VSCs request made immediately.</p> <p>VSCs to be completed within six weeks following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health (may be extended based on backlogs).</p>
<p>A 65(3) A 65(4) R14(2)</p>	Staff Training	<p>Complete this training within first <u>two</u> weeks of employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 65(2)(b); Zero tolerance of abuse and neglect policy • ACT 65(2)(g); Emergency evacuation plan • ACT 65(2)(h); Emergency plan and infection prevention and control program <p>Complete this training within <u>four</u> weeks of hire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 65(5) para. 3; Behaviour management <p>Remaining required training within <u>six</u> weeks of hire.</p> <p>Annual retraining that expires during this COVID-19 situation will have a grace period of one month following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health.</p>
A 62(12)	Re-Assessment	<p>Six-month reassessments will not be required. Homes will be given four weeks to complete these following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health and discretion may be used depending on progress.</p> <p>The requirements that remain unchanged include that reassessment be completed if a goal in the plan is met, the resident's care needs change or the care services set out in the plan are no longer necessary or the care services set out in the plan have not been effective.</p>
<p>R 24(5) R 25(5) R26(6)</p>	Emergency Plan	<p>Testing requirements and annual evaluation that were planned during this period. Homes would have an additional eight weeks to complete this following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health.</p>
R 15(3)(g)	Abuse Policy	<p>Annual Evaluation. Homes would have an additional 4 weeks to complete evaluation of the policy following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health.</p>

R 59(2) R 59(3)	Complaints	Record outcomes of complaints and evaluation. Homes would have an additional two weeks to complete records for individual complaints and four weeks to complete quarterly evaluations following the return to normal operations per Chief Medical Officer of Health.
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The RHRA is in regular contact with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, and we are also working closely with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care. We will continue to share the experience of retirement homes with our colleagues in government in our role as trusted advisor.

We will take a pragmatic and flexible approach to how we regulate and take the evolving situation into account. We will keep the lines of communications open with licensees and continue to work collaboratively with ORCA and AdvantAge to support homes through this situation.

Please continue to watch for updates from us through RHRA Update. Please email [e-newsletter@rhra.ca](mailto:newsletter@rhra.ca) to register to receive these communications if you're not already subscribed. The latest information coming from the Ministry of Health can be found [here](#).

Please also visit Ministry of Health's [guidance documents](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#) for other COVID-19 protocols.

We continue to monitor the situation and will keep you up to date with any further developments.

Sincerely,

Jay O'Neill
CEO and Registrar