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| **The Participation House Project (Durham Region)**  **55 Gordon Street, Unit 1, East Administrative Tower, Whitby ON L1N 0J2**  **Phone: 905-579-5267**  **Fax: 905-579-5281** | |
| **DATE: May 31, 2021**  **TO: All Employees**  **FROM: Leadership Team**  **RE: Commitment to Continuous Communication-**  **Outdoor Visiting in Congregate Settings** | |

Yesterday, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) provided PH and all service provider agencies with updated, interim directions regarding Outdoor Visiting for congregate care settings. The directions are as listed below:

Effective May 22, 2021 at 12:01 am, the outdoor limit for social gatherings in Ontario was expanded to five people (including those from different households). This means outdoor visits at our congregate living settings can now resume.

The current MCCSS COVID-19 guidance for congregate settings remains in effect and are to continue to follow the **ENHANCED** precautions.

With the stay-at-home order in place, people are required to remain at home unless going out for essential purposes, including attending school or work which cannot be done remotely and/or to attend medical appointments and where visits to locations were limited to only essential visitors. With the expansion on the limits of outdoor gatherings, indoor and outdoor visits with essential visitors **AND** outdoor visits with non-essential visitors are both permitted. Please note that only 1 essential visitor is permitted entry into units at a time.

***Essential visitors:***

* Do not need to schedule an outdoor (or indoor) visit but MUST call upon arrival
* Must pass active screening for COVID-19.
* Must wear surgical/procedure masks, gowns and eye protection at all times.

**Note:** Wherever possible, essential visits such as those necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety of a resident **will be permitted to continue** unless the local public health unit directs otherwise as part of outbreak management. An essential visitor may include, but is not limited to, a parent or guardian, a social service worker or a health care provider.

***Non-essential visitors:***

* Must schedule an outdoor visit.
* Must pass active screening for COVID-19.
* Must wear surgical/procedure masks, gowns and eye protection at all times.
* Must maintain physical distance at all times (2 meters/6 feet).
* Must not enter the congregate living setting during visits.
* Visits must be supervised by a staff person.

Visits may also take place in the general vicinity, however nearby spaces such as local parks or parkettes can also be utilized to enable family and friends to visit residents. Every effort should be made to ensure different groups of visitors are also physically distanced.

Should individuals living at residential locations wish to visit with neighbours who are part of The Participation House Project, and who live within the same residential setting, they may do so following the non-essential visitor guidelines above (only outdoors, with surgical/procedural mask and face/eye protection, keeping 6ft apart). Indoor visits would not be permitted.

MCCSS has stated that the above measures apply regardless of vaccination status and/or use of on-site rapid antigen screening.

We understand that MCCSS will continue to actively monitor community transmission rates as well as vaccination levels among our service sectors. Current direction will continue to remain in effect until community transmission rates decrease and vaccination rates reach adequate levels. The ministry will continue to review emerging evidence in collaboration with health system partners and technical experts from Public Health Ontario and within the health system to understand the most appropriate measures to take moving forward.