
To: Staff (including Agency Staff) and physicians of Copernicus Lodge Long Term Care Home
From: Copernicus Lodge & Unity Health Toronto Leadership
Subject: Staff and Physician Update – Mar. 12, 2021

Mar. 12, 2021

Hello staff and physicians of Copernicus Lodge,

Today we are reaching out about:

1. Change to staff communication frequency
2. Updates and reminders

Change to staff communication frequency

We shared with you on Wednesday that we will now be hosting our Staff Town Halls on Tuesdays at 1:45pm via Zoom and will be sending you email updates on Wednesdays. You can also call into these meetings if you are at home or don't have access to internet.

What does this change mean for you?

- The next Town Hall will be Tuesday, Mar. 16 at 1:45pm – please see zoom details below to attend the meeting
- Starting next week we will now have staff Town Halls every Tuesday
- Starting next week we will share our regular weekly email update with you on Wednesdays
- You can pre-submit any questions to communications@copernicuslodge.com.

Zoom info:

<https://zoom.us/j/96583057880?pwd=OExZLzJqV2xRZ09JWDIvWWdwSWRzUT09>

Meeting ID: 965 8305 7880

Passcode: 612937

Call-in information:

647-374-4685 and entering the meeting ID: 965 8305 7880 and passcode: 612937.

Updates and reminders

Rapid testing update

As you are aware, we are transitioning to rapid antigen testing for staff, physicians and Essential Caregivers (ECs). Rapid testing is used to screen and detect COVID-19, with a result available within in

15 to 20 minutes. A preliminary positive result using this testing method is not sufficient to diagnose COVID-19, so anyone who screens positive with a rapid test, will need to have a regular PCR COVID test done to confirm. We will do these tests for you at Copernicus lodge before you go home to self isolate.

In line with the directive from the Ministry of Long-Term Care, homes must fully transition to providing rapid antigen tests by March 15.

What this means for our staff and physicians

- The rapid antigen testing clinic will be open 7 days a week from 6am until midnight. The last test will be at 11:30pm.
- When staff and physicians arrive at Copernicus they will go through the usual entrance screening process and then be directed to the the Rapid Testing area next to the entrance screening stations.
- Following registration you will have the rapid test (nasal swab in both sides of your nose) and then you can proceed to go to your unit. Your result will be read within 15-20 minutes and you will be notified, only if the result is positive. You will not hear from the team if you are negative – no news is good news.
- If the result is preliminary positive, you will be offered a resular nasopharyngeal swab (or directed to a COVID Assessment Center if you prefer) in order to verify the result of the rapid test. You will be contacted by the IPAC team when your PCR test result is received and they will inform you of when you can return to work. If you find your result online and you have not yet heard from the IPAC team, please contact Carmen Miller to inquire about return to work.
- All staff who have not had COVID-19 within the last 90 days are required to be tested.
- Staff working more than 2 consecutive days in a row are required to have the rapid antigen test 3 times per week. If you work only 1 or 2 shifts per week, you will be required to be tested on each entry to Copernicus Lodge.

This is a new process and we have many new staff to assist this in running smoothly. We ask for your patience and understanding of our new entrance screeners and with the Rapid Testing clinic staff. Please expect delays as we continue to learn and improve the processes daily. As always, if you have any suggestions to improve, we would love to hear them.

Updates to Essential Caregiver process

We have made some revisions to the existing processes for essential caregiver designation and attestation in order to ensure we are meeting the Ministry directive. All current essential caregivers will be contacted over the next week for us to review the new information with them and ensure we have documented all training they have received and that the designated 2 essential caregivers for each resident are updated in our records.

Moving forward, anyone wishing to become an essential caregiver should reach out to Carmen Miller directly. They will need to fill out an Essential Caregiver Designation and Attestation Form and once completed, provide it to Carmen so that she can arrange for the required training. All new essential caregivers will need to go through this process before being able to visit.

We have emailed this form to families, will have it available on our website and will also leave copies at entrance screening beginning Monday March 15th, for families who are interested in becoming an essential caregiver.

The third wave and variants of concern

- Experts are warning that a third wave of COVID-19 is drawing nearer. On [Monday](#), 31 per cent of recent COVID-19 tests in Ontario came back as positive for a variant of concern (VOC). On Thursday, it was [reported](#) that it's closer to 40 per cent.
- VOCs spread more easily than the original COVID-19 virus. In addition to being more transmissible, VOCs may still be able to cause infection in people who have had COVID-19 before or who have had the COVID-19 vaccine.
- VOCs are transmitted from person to person the same way that the original COVID-19 is. The method of transmission hasn't changed for these variants and therefore the same public health measures will protect you including masking, physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- There is early data that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines remain effective to protect against the VOCs identified in Canada although there may be some decrease in efficacy. Evidence to date show that the vaccines would protect against severe illness caused by COVID-19 or VOCs.
- The vaccine is still the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones and our residents and stop the spread of the virus. Even if you have received the vaccine, it is still important to remain vigilant about adhering to IPAC measures and ensure you are protected by wearing proper PPE to protect others.
- We are continuing to urge all staff to get vaccinated and are pleased to share an overall 13% increase in staff vaccinations. Currently, 26% of staff have been fully vaccinated and 10% are awaiting their second dose. While this is a nice increase, it is certainly not near the vaccination rate we would hope to see in a long term care home. Please do give this your serious consideration. Without an increase in vaccinations, we will be at risk for another outbreak and contagion among staff in a third wave

Following up to the Feb. 23 Ministry of Labour visit

- As shared on Feb. 23, we had a proactive visit from the Ministry of Labour to observe and evaluate the COVID-19 response plans, new processes and training for staff within the long-term care home
- A visit from the Ministry of Labour is not unusual, especially during outbreak, and they have been more active in coming to employers for visits of this nature
- We received The Ministry's official report, and there were no orders issued to the home. We want to thank our teams for their work and continued support.

Ministry of Long-Term Care

- A compliance officer visited Copernicus Lodge on Jan. 11, and a report came out on Feb. 26.
- We are reviewing the report and the orders issued and will share more details with all of you and our action plan at the Town Hall on Tuesday, Mar. 16.
- After we discuss the report, we will share more details in our Wednesday update with all of you, and with families in our Family Town Hall on Thursday, Mar. 18.

Staff smoking not prohibited

- Please note that staff who smoke should do so in the designated area outside on Roncesvalles, at the corner of our property near the parking lot.
- Staff should not smoke in the gazebo in the courtyard. This area is for residents only. Thank you for your cooperation.

Early Impact of Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout on Long-Term Care Home Residents and Health Care Workers

- A report published earlier this week from Ontario's COVID-19 Science Table has found the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines to Ontario's long-term care (LTC) homes has substantially reduced SARS-CoV-2 infections, COVID-19 hospitalizations, and deaths among LTC residents and health care workers.
- The data found that by prioritizing long-term care residents and staff in Ontario, 615 deaths were prevented and 98% of cases prevented in residents.
- Read the report [here](#) and [this](#) Toronto Star article.

COVID-19 vaccine clinic appointments open for March 15 to 20:

The St. Joseph's and St. Michael's COVID-19 vaccination clinics are available for booking first dose appointments from March 15 to 20. Vaccinations are an important part of our collective fight against COVID-19.

- **St. Joseph's Vaccine Clinic hours:**

Monday, March 15 to Saturday, March 20, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunnyside Gymnasium, Sunnyside Building, 1st floor

- **St. Michael's Vaccine Clinic hours:**

Monday, March 15 to Saturday, March 20, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Peter Gilgan Patient Care Tower, 36 Queen Street East

- To book an appointment, please contact Mitzi Yu at 416-536-7122 ext. 252 or mitziy@copernicuslodge.com. Copernicus Lodge/Agency ID and a second form of Identification (Health Card, Driver's Licence, Passport, Out of Province Health Card) are required at appointments
- Staff, physicians and essential caregivers can now cancel their own first dose appointments, if needed. There will be a button/link to cancel in your confirmation message. Please note that if you do cancel your appointment, please let Mitzi know so that we can update our tracking tool.
- Please wear outdoor clothing to both the St. Joseph's and St. Michael's clinics in case you are required to wait outside for a period of time.

Change to timing for second doses of COVID-19 vaccines

Last week the Ontario government [announced](#) it would accept the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommendation to change to the dosing interval for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Effective Wednesday, March 10, second dose vaccinations will be rescheduled to 16 weeks after the first dose for everyone excluding:

- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and Assisted Living facilities.
- Remote and isolated First Nation communities (currently supported by Operation Remote Immunity).

This extended interval applies to the three two-dose vaccines currently approved by Health Canada (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD).

What this means for second dose appointments:

- **Those who have second dose appointments schedule on or after Wednesday, March 10 will be rescheduled to 16 weeks from the time you had your first dose.**
 - Unity Health will be calling people directly to reschedule second dose appointments between now and Saturday, March 13.
 - All others will receive confirmation messages with rescheduled second dose appointments to the phone or email address that you provided when you booked your first dose appointment.

We understand this is disappointing news for those anticipating their second dose.

This change was recommended by NACI based on emerging evidence that demonstrates that there are high levels of protection provided by the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. NACI says that in the context of limited COVID-19 vaccine supply, jurisdictions should maximize the number of individuals benefiting from the first dose of vaccine by extending the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine up to four months after the first. This will achieve greater protection in a shorter timeframe which should have public health benefits in preventing hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19.

With this change and the approval of new vaccines, the provincial government expects to be able to offer first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to all Ontarians over the age of 60 by the end of May.

We understand that this extended interval may cause concern. We want to assure you that this increased interval will not impact vaccine safety. NACI's recommendation was based on existing evidence and experience with other immunization programs that demonstrate that delays between doses do not result in a reduction in final antibody concentrations. Other health systems in Canada and internationally have taken similar measures with their immunization programs. [You can read the full statement from NACI here.](#)

Going forward, Unity Health Toronto and all Ontario vaccination sites are required to book second dose vaccination appointments according to this new interval for most populations. In the coming weeks, we will work to schedule all new and outstanding second dose appointments according to the 16 week interval.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to adjust our immunization program according to this new guidance.

Staff updates

- We are pleased to welcome Dr. Patricia Muddiman and Dr. Janine Stephens to Copernicus Lodge as Attending Physicians (LOCUM) for the next three months.
- Dr. Patricia Muddiman has extensive experience working with seniors in various settings and is very passionate and looking forward to working with our residents. Dr. Muddiman is a graduate from Jagiellonian University Medical College in Krakow, Poland, where she studied internal medicine. Effective March 1, 2021, she has been assigned to provide Physician Services to residents on 3N.
- Dr. Janine Stephens has experience in family medicine and has worked with seniors over the years. Dr. Stephens is a graduate from University of Toronto and went on to specialize in Family Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick. Effective March 1, 2021, she has been assigned to provide physician services to residents on 1N and 1S.
- Drs. Muddiman and Stephens are supporting us on a locum basis in lieu of our two recently retired physicians as we work to solidify a new model of care for the home. We have communicated Drs. Muddiman and Stephens' introduction directly to the families on the units that they are assigned, but are sharing this news with the broader group.
- Welcome to Copernicus Lodge, Drs. Muddiman and Stephens!

Daylight savings on Sunday, Mar. 14

- The dark days of winter are almost behind us – at least when it comes to the time on the clock. Daylight Savings Time is set for Sunday, March 14 at 2 a.m.
- For most people, this means it will be time to “spring forward” the clock by one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 13. The change means there will be more daylight in the afternoon hour.