

December 21, 2021

Good day families and staff at Community Living Burlington:

As we see the rapid transmission of the new variant, Omicron, our Ministry has sent out new guidelines today for employees and the people we support and their families. The Rapid Antigen test process has changed; especially around the distribution. I know that many families have asked for the tests but we will be following these guidelines going forward.

### **SCREENING USING RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS**

Beginning December 24, 2021, and until further notice, agencies are requested to change their asymptomatic screening protocols for the use of rapid antigen test kits for employees and visitors in group living settings.

1. **Regardless of vaccination status**, all employees need to be tested 2 times per week in a 7-day period. Given that we are at the end of the day on the 21<sup>st</sup>, this will be difficult to be put in place. We will do our best.
2. **Visitors, regardless of the vaccination status**, before entering a home, must present a negative Rapid Antigen screening result from the **day before**.

### **GUIDELINES FOR VISITS OVERNIGHT**

The Ministry has strongly recommended that the people we support who return from an overnight visit will provide a negative Rapid Antigen screening result. We understand that tests can be difficult for the people we support but we strongly encourage and promote the use of these tests. We will provide this test when your family member leaves for their visit.

#### **For overnight absences of 2 nights or less:**

Rapid antigen screening should occur on day three and day seven from the day the person we support has left the home.

**For overnight absences of 3 nights or more:** Rapid antigen screening should occur on the day of return (as part of active screening upon entry) and day four following their return. If the person we support leaves for a subsequent overnight absence, a new testing period should be started when they return to the home.

#### **Booster vaccines:**

Getting the booster shot is another way of reducing the transmission of the Omicron variant. Our employees and the people we support have been working hard to get their appointments booked. We will continue to work with our local Public Health Unit

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to see if we can get a clinic at Mainway as we have done before. Until then, we strongly recommend that everyone book their third vaccine/booster.

We realize that this is not an easy time for anyone. The goal of our agency is to keep everyone safe. We have HEPA filters in the homes, we are regularly opening windows for clean airflow and we have also been asked to even run the bathroom fans and kitchen fans as well to keep air circulation going.

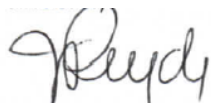
Please bear with us during all of these changes. Our employees are doing the best that they can. Getting the Rapid Antigen tests to you will be a priority as well so that hopefully, people will enjoy the holidays safely.

I hope that this will be the last update that is provided to you before the holidays start but I can't promise that.

I appreciate the distress and anxiousness everyone is experiencing now. The only advice I can give to you all is to be patient and kind to each other while we muddle through all of this.

Hoping you all have a safe holiday season

Judy Pryde

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director

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