

## Frequently-Asked Questions – COVID-19

Last updated December 2021

### ABOUT VACCINES AND VACCINATION RATES

#### **What is the status of vaccinations at Revera homes and residences?**

Vaccines are a proven, safe and powerful weapon in our battle against COVID-19, and Revera strongly advocates for them. Since October 12, 2021, Revera has enforced its mandatory vaccine policy for all staff at our Canadian retirement residences, long term care facilities, and at our Support Office in Mississauga. That means that, unless an individual has a medical exemption, the staff providing services and care to residents are vaccinated. This also applies to our volunteers, students, agency staff and contractors. COVID-19 vaccine clinics for first and second doses have taken place at all of our sites, the vast majority of residents (94% in both long term care and in retirement as of December 2021) have received two doses, and an increasing majority of residents have received their third booster shot.

In addition, effective November 15, 2021, Revera requires visitors to provide proof of vaccination upon entry to any of our retirement residences or long term care homes. We understand the importance for our residents to be able to visit with friends and family. Depending on the province and the current guidelines in place, we are able to support visitation for unvaccinated essential visitors, however, these visits have some enhanced safety requirements which include:

- Completing a negative Rapid Antigen test upon entry into the home/residence
- Limiting visits to a designated area in the home
- Requiring continuous masking in all home/residence areas, including resident rooms.

#### **What is Revera’s policy on staff vaccinations?**

Revera first announced our intention to lead the way and implement a mandatory vaccination policy back in July, and then reiterated this intent together with a coalition of other private senior living operators in late August. Effective October 12, 2021, all Revera staff members are required to be vaccinated except when impossible due to legitimate, established medical exemptions. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and students at Revera retirement homes and long term care facilities, as well as Revera’s Support Office in Mississauga, Ontario. This policy reflects the expectation by Canadians that healthcare workers be fully vaccinated to reduce the risk of the spread and severity of the coronavirus, and is consistent to our commitment and obligation to take measures to protect residents and staff.

COVID-19 is far from over and new variants continue to threaten the health and safety of Canadians, particularly vulnerable groups, including seniors. Vaccines have proven to be highly effective, safe public health tools that significantly reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalizations. When such powerful tools are available, tools we know will enhance the safety and wellbeing of our residents, families and staff, our policies must support their use.

We are grateful to our staff who have made the choice to be vaccinated, and to our union partners who have supported and encouraged staff vaccinations. This policy is one more important step to protect both our residents and staff as we continue to battle this deadly virus, and its evolving variants.

## **ABOUT VISITING A REVERA HOME OR RESIDENCE**

### **What are the rules or guidelines around visiting a resident in a long term care home or retirement residence?**

The rules around visiting residents varies by province and sometimes within provinces based on different public health authorities or regions. The rules also vary depending on whether or not the site is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19, or if the resident is self-isolating or showing symptoms. Many provinces have special provisions for designated visitors or essential caregivers. Please see the latest information on [visiting someone in long term care](#), or [visiting someone in a retirement residence](#).

As outlined above, effective November 15, 2021, Revera requires visitors to provide proof of vaccination upon entry to any of our retirement residences or long term care homes.

### **Do visitors need to be vaccinated?**

Yes. To support the safety and health of our residents and staff, Revera now requires visitors to provide proof of vaccination upon entry to any of our retirement residences or long term care homes. We understand the importance for our residents to be able to visit with friends and family. Depending on the province and the current guidelines in place, we are able to support visitation for unvaccinated essential visitors, however, these visits have some enhanced safety requirements which include:

- Completing a negative Rapid Antigen test upon entry into the home/residence
- Limiting visits to a designated area in the home
- Requiring continuous masking in all home/residence areas, including resident rooms.

### **Is it possible to tour a Revera retirement residence?**

We are offering both in-person and virtual tours at many of our retirement residences. Find more information about the virtual tours at Revera at [reveraliving.com/virtualtour](https://reveraliving.com/virtualtour) or contact us at 1-877-929-9222.

### **Is it possible to tour a Revera long term care home?**

Rules for touring long term care homes vary from province to province. In Ontario and British Columbia, in-person tours can take place provided they are booked in advance. Any individual who tours the home is considered a general visitor, which means that they are required to be vaccinated to enter a Revera home or residence. In Manitoba & Alberta, tours remain virtual at this time. Virtual tours are also available at all homes should that be the preference of the resident or visitor.

## **ABOUT DAILY LIFE IN OUR HOMES AND RESIDENCES**

### **How is daily life in Revera homes and residences changing now that most residents and staff are vaccinated?**

As provinces start to re-open, communal dining has resumed in many of our homes and residences, with appropriate physical distancing and/or cohorting in effect.

Our group recreation programs always respect physical distancing requirements and provincial limits on indoor group sizes, where applicable. Individual recreation activities are offered to residents who are symptomatic or self-isolating. Hairdressing and personal care services have also resumed.

### **Do residents need to wear masks in common areas of the home and during visits?**

Mask protocols vary from province to province. In British Columbia and Alberta long term care homes, residents are not required to wear masks. All homes in Ontario are required to have policies regarding masking for residents. While there is no requirement for residents to wear a mask, a home's policy must set out that residents must be encouraged to wear or be assisted to wear a mask when physical distancing can't be maintained, except for mealtimes. Homes are also required to follow any additional directions provided by the province, the local public health unit or municipal bylaws.

In other provinces, residents must wear masks (if tolerated) in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

### **Is it possible for residents to leave for errands, day trips or overnight visits?**

Each province has different guidelines around short absences, and these also vary between long term care homes and retirement residences. Please contact the Executive Director for specifics.

## ABOUT COVID-19 OUTBREAKS

### **What happens if an outbreak is declared at a Revera home or residence?**

Outbreaks are always managed under the guidance of the local public health authority, so the exact protocols can vary based on the situation and the jurisdiction. We continue to follow or exceed all public health guidance. When an outbreak is declared, we work with public health to do contact tracing to determine who may have had contact with the affected individual. We may test asymptomatic residents or staff.

We immediately step up the frequency of our enhanced cleaning, which means more frequent disinfection of high-touch surfaces like handrails and doors, common areas and staff rooms. Residents are monitored more frequently for symptoms and are tested if they present any potential signs or symptoms of the virus. Some or all residents may be placed in isolation in their rooms or suites or may be divided into cohorts which do not intermingle. If necessary, meals are served in resident rooms or suites, with supervision or assistance if required.

Usually, group recreation activities in the affected home area are replaced with individual activities designed to maintain stimulation and social engagement during the period of isolation. Often, general visits are suspended during an outbreak. Usually, visits from essential visitors, essential caregivers or designated family members are permitted (the terminology varies from province to province). Essential visits for residents receiving palliative or end-of-life care are always allowed.

### **With all of the safety protocols in place, how does COVID-19 still enter a home or residence?**

It is often impossible, even with contact tracing, to know precisely how COVID-19 entered a home or residence. In some cases, asymptomatic staff, care providers or caregivers were exposed to the virus in the community and inadvertently brought it into the home. In addition, throughout the pandemic, residents have needed to leave our homes or residences temporarily for medical treatments and appointments such as visiting hospitals for day treatments, dialysis or minor surgery. Since restrictions have been relaxed, residents may choose to leave the home or residence for a variety of reasons, including medical appointments, family visits or shopping. Even if residents never leave the home or residence, many have visitors, and staff and visitors interact with others while in the community and in their homes.

While it is possible to contract COVID-19 after being vaccinated, the risk is much lower, and the risk of severe illness is reduced as well. That is why Revera has mandated staff vaccinations against the virus and is supportive of mandated visitor vaccinations as well. Together with our vaccination requirements, we have many infection prevention and control practices in place, including staff and resident screening, surveillance testing, PPE, hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and sanitization. While these interventions cannot be guaranteed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, they are highly effective. Please know that we take this virus extremely seriously and we are doing everything we can to keep our residents and staff safe.

### **What is Revera doing to prepare for future waves of COVID-19?**

Revera's comprehensive [Pandemic Response Plan](#) focuses on five priority areas: external advisory committee, analytics, building and infrastructure, clinical and operational initiatives, and staffing. Revera has also introduced a mandatory vaccination policy for all staff.

### **What is considered an outbreak?**

Outbreaks are declared by the local or provincial public health authority, and only public health can declare them over. The definition of an outbreak varies from province to province and is always at the discretion of public health. In Ontario, the definition of a COVID-19 outbreak is outlined [here](#).

Here are some additional resources for more information:

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Ontario Retirement Communities Association](#)
- [Ontario Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority](#)
- [Ontario Long Term Care](#)
- [Newfoundland](#)