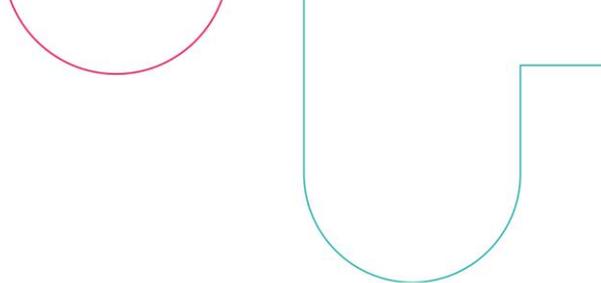




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Canada

# Scan of Provincial and Territorial Government Guidance for Essential Care Partner Presence and Visitor Policies

October 2021



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## Overview

This scan provides a glimpse into the visiting guidelines for acute care and long-term care facilities. The policies have shown considerable change since the last policy scan done in July, with one major difference being the introduction of vaccine mandates within certain provinces and territories. These mandates require visitors and/or essential care partners to be fully vaccinated (received both doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine with a minimum 14 days since receiving 2nd dose) against COVID-19 in order to visit patients in healthcare facilities or long-term care homes.

Other changes include an increase in number of visitors in certain settings. In general, there is more widespread acknowledgement and differentiation of essential care partners from general visitors and most settings allow the presence of one essential care partner at least some of the time in most circumstances in hospital settings, with more open essential care partner presence policies in place in long term care settings.

Many provinces continue to use levels and zones to determine the visitor requirements dependent on the amount of COVID-19 in the surrounding area. Infection prevention and control protocols, such as the use of masks when visiting facilities and LTC centres, screening before entering, and practicing hand hygiene, continue to be used.

## Definitions

### Essential Care Partners

Essential care partners provide physical, psychological, and emotional support, as deemed important by the patient. This care can include support in decision making, care coordination and continuity of care. Essential care partners can include family members, close friends or other caregivers and are identified by the patient or substitute decision maker.

### Visitor

In the context of family presence policies, any individual who does not play a significant role in the ongoing care of the patient is considered a 'visitor'.

## British Columbia

### *Acute care setting* [updated October 21, 2021]

- Essential and social visitors are now collectively referred to as “**visitors**”
- Starting October 26, all visitors will require proof to show they are fully vaccinated, those who are not will be unable to visit.
- Visitors shall be screened at point of entry for symptoms.
- Visitors are required to follow IPC procedures such as masking and practicing good hand hygiene. Physical distancing is not required, but personal space should be respected.
- Up to **two visitors** may visit at a time, with exceptions to compassionate care, pediatric care where the limit of two may be removed, and in emergency care where it is limited to one.

### *Long-term care and Assisted Living setting* [updated October 21, 2021]

- Starting October 26, all visitors will require proof to show they are fully vaccinated, those who are not will be unable to visit.
- Visitors will no longer be required to schedule or book their visits in advance.
- The limit on the number of social visitors each resident can have has been removed. However, the maximum number of visitors at one time must align with visitor capacity.

## Alberta

### *Acute care setting* [updated October 21, 2021]

- Designated Support persons and visitors are highly recommended to be fully immunized.
- Visitors are expected to complete health screening before entering, and follow IPC procedures, i.e. continuous masking, practice proper hand hygiene and physically distance.
- Generally, one essential care partner is allowed, with two permitted in certain circumstances such as end of life.

### *Long-term care setting* [updated October 21, 2021]

- Designated Support persons and visitors are highly recommended to be fully immunized.
- Visitors are expected to complete health screening before entering, and follow IPC procedures, i.e. continuous masking, practice proper hand hygiene and physically distance.

## Saskatchewan

Restrictions are separated into four levels: (i) Recovery Phase: A Safe Progression to Open Family Presence; (ii) Level 1 – Pandemic Restrictions, (iii) Level 2 – Family Presence Restrictions; (iiii) Level 3 – End of Life Reasons Only. Facilities with a level 3 status have the most restrictions

### *Acute care settings* [Updated October 9, 2021]

- Recovery: **Two family or designated support persons** (DSPs) can be present at a time indoors. **Up to four DSPs may be present** at a time for the following: intensive care, maternal, postpartum, and pediatric units; end of life or palliative care.
- Outdoor visits have no limit on DSPs or visitors that can be present at a time.
- Level 1: Every patient or resident can have **two DSPs**. **One** person can visit at a time.
- Level 2: All patients/residents can designate **one DSP**. More than **one** can be designated in: end of life, critical or intensive care units, maternal or pediatric units.
- Level 3 restrictions: End of life reasons only
- Vaccinations are not mandatory for DSPs

### *Long-term care settings* [Updated September 8, 2021]

- Recovery: No limits on the number of DSPs or visitors.
- Screening is required before visitation.
- Level 1: Every patient or resident can have **two DSPs**. **One** person can visit at a time.
- Level 2: All patients/residents can designate **one DSP**. More than **one** can be designated in the following: end of life/palliative care.
- Level 3 restrictions: End of life reasons only
- Vaccinations are not mandatory for DSPs

## Manitoba

Limitations are separated into three distinct zones: (i) Red Zone: Outbreak or High Level of COVID-19 Activity; (ii) Orange Zone: Moderate Level of COVID-19 Activity; (iii) Yellow zone: Very Low Level of COVID-19 Activity. Red Zone has the most restrictions for presence of family and caregivers and general visitors

### *Acute care settings* [Updated October 6, 2021]

- **One designated support person** (DSP) can be identified to visit, the exception being patients whose hospital stays extend beyond 14 days, when **two DSPs** are permitted.
- **One DSP** will be able to visit at a time, exception will be made for certain circumstances (e.g., labour and delivery, pediatrics, end-of-life care)
- All visitors will be screened prior to entrance into facilities and are expected to be instructed on IPC protocols and adhere to them.
- Outdoor visits are encouraged when appropriate, limit of two approved visitors
- Visitor limits should be communicated to patients and visitors.

### *Long-term care settings* [updated October 5, 2021]

- **Two DSPs** can be identified by residents but only **one** may visit at a time. DSPs should have the flexibility to visit anytime and for any length of time during specified visitation hours and /or as determined with the care team.
- If the Resident is fully vaccinated, they may identify up to **two vaccinated general visitors** for indoor/outdoor visits if physical distancing can be maintained.
- If the resident is vaccinated or unvaccinated but is COVID-19 recovered within 180 days, up to 4 vaccinated general visitors can visit if physical distancing is maintained.
- End-of-life residents can identify up to **four DSPs**, but only **two** may visit at any time and for any length; in addition up to **one** unvaccinated visitor may visit, if space provided.

## Ontario

### *Acute care settings* [Updated October 2021]

- **1 or 2 essential care partners** are permitted to visit per patient, visitor restrictions are at the discretion of each Ontario hospital. All care partners must be instructed on IPC protocol and adhere to these protocols.
- Care partners are to be screened before entry into facilities.
- Some Ontario health facilities will now require visitors and essential care providers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19

### *Long-term care settings* [Updated October 2021]

- There are no limits on the number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.
- In the event there is an outbreak or patient is self-isolating or symptomatic, essential visitors are to visit one at a time and are the only ones available to visit.
- All essential visitors are to be screen before entry into facility and are to be instructed of IPC protocols.
- Outdoor visiting is encouraged however determined by each facility.
- Currently, there is no limit to the number of persons who can be designated as a caregiver for a resident, however, only one caregiver may visit a resident who is isolating or in situations where a home or area of a home is in outbreak. Care givers must be trained by the home on how to safely provide care.
- General visitors are not permitted during outbreaks, to visit an isolating patient, or when the local health units so direct.

## Quebec

Limitations and restrictions are separated into four distinct levels (i) Level 1 – Vigilance (Green Zone), (ii) Level 2 – Early Warning (Yellow Zone), (iii) Level 3 - Alert (Orange Zone), (iiii) Level 4 – Maximum Alert (Red Zone).

### *Acute care settings* [Updated October 19, 2021]

- Level 1 – visits are allowed by 2 people at a time.
- Level 2 – visits are restricted to informal caregivers only, 2 informal caregivers are allowed at a time.
- Level 3 – visits are restricted to informal caregivers only, 1 informal caregiver at a time with a maximum of 2 per day. A max of 3 different informal caregivers can be identified.
- Level 4 - visits are restricted to informal caregivers only with a maximum of 1 per day. A max of 2 different informal caregivers can be identified.
- Visitors are now required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before being allowed to visit.

### *Long-term care settings* [Accessed October 21,2021]

- Visitors are currently limited.
- A max of 9 people at a time (10 including the resident) are allowed inside and outside the facility while respecting the accommodations capacity for physical distancing.
- Visitors must wear a mask at all times, practice hand hygiene and physically distance themselves at all times.

## New Brunswick

*All Healthcare settings* [Updated October 15, 2021]

- No visitors are allowed at this point of time with exceptions for designated support persons (DSPs).
- Effective November 19, 2021 DSPs will be required to be fully vaccinated to visit an admitted patient or to accompany an outpatient.
- For Emergency Department or Ambulatory Care visits: only **one** DSP is allowed for patients requiring physical or emotional support, decision-making or communication assistance. This person must be fully vaccinated.
- **One** DSP is allowed for the following: patients in paediatrics, palliative care, in emergency or ambulatory services, patients hospitalized for more than 14 days.
- **Two** DSPs are allowed for patients at end of life or patients receiving medical assistance in dying.
- DSP's must follow proper IPC procedure such as washing hands often, wear their masks constantly, comply with physical distancing, and do screening before entering.

## Nova Scotia

### *Acute Care Settings* [Updated October 13, 2021]

- Effective October 13, 2021, most visitors and support people coming to Nova Scotia health facilities will be required to show full proof of vaccination or medical exemption letter along with government issued ID. Exceptions will be granted for someone accompanying patients under the age of 19, patients in labour and delivery and a patient requiring a substitute decision-maker.
- For those with an unvaccinated support person, no additional visitors will be permitted.
- **Three** designated family/primary support person(s) or family caregivers are welcomed for: palliative care, end of life and patients receiving medical assistance in dying.
- **Two** family/primary support person(s) or family caregivers are welcomed for: Children under 18, patients in ICU, critically ill patients and patients in labour and birth.
- **One** family/primary support person or family caregiver is welcomed for: hospital inpatients, patients in emergency departments, prenatal visits, and ambulatory care.
- Hospital inpatients are asked to identify three support people per week. These three designated support may visit each day, but only one will be permitted to visit at a time
- Palliative patients and others nearing end of life may identify a maximum of five designated support people. Three of these five designated support people may visit each day and can visit at the same time where space permit

### *Long-term settings* [Updated August 9, 2021]

- All visitors must be screened
- Visitors must continue to wear their mask at all times, asides from designated spaces indoors (visitation area/resident room) or to eat/drink during an outdoor visit.
- Visitors must provide proof of full vaccination
- Designated care givers when permitted must be educated/trained to understand the infection prevention and control and other guidelines/policies within the facility

## Prince Edward Island

### *Acute Care Settings* [Updated October 4, 2021]

- Patients may have Visitors and Partners in Care (either indoors or outdoors) at any time; however a maximum of three (3) Visitors, including the Partner(s) in Care, may be present at the bedside at one time. Length and frequency of bedside visits are dependent on the site's operational plan.
- Partners in Care are not required to schedule their visit but rather are encouraged to inform the facility of when they plan to visit.
- One (1) Partner(s) in Care are permitted for patients in COVID-19 care areas include COVID-19 medical units.
- Two (2) Partners in Care are permitted for pediatric, newborn, ICU, Palliative Care patients and Rosedale Care Centre residents
- Exceptions will be made in other care areas when patients are at end of life and the Partners in Care must wear full personal protective equipment (i.e., wear masks, gowns, gloves, and visors/goggles).

### *Long-term settings* [Updated July 19, 2021]

- Long-Term Care residents may designate up to three (3) Partners in Care who will be allowed to visit at any time of day to support them.
- Long-Term Care residents may have an unlimited number of Designated Visitors.
- Fully vaccinated Partners in Care and Designated Visitors may visit with fully vaccinated Residents indoors in the resident's room without masks, if they maintain physical distancing from other persons at the facility

## Newfoundland Labrador

*All healthcare settings* [updated September 18, 2020]

- Visitors are not limited to one visit a day.
- All visitors must be screened upon arrival, and all visitor(s) are required to wear a face mask in indoor public spaces and perform appropriate hand hygiene
- The patient/resident/family will coordinate the visiting times, ensuring that physical distancing requirements can be maintained by the visitors in the space available
- Visitors can visit either in-home, window visiting, or outdoor visiting.
- Individuals who are required to self-isolate are permitted to provide support/visit only in specific situations (i.e. end of life or obstetrics) and in consultation with the clinical care team.

## Yukon

### *Acute Care settings* [updated October 8, 2021]

- Visitors are required to show proof of full vaccination against COVID-19, however Support persons do not need to be vaccinated.
- Visitors will be screened when they visit the hospital, and must follow IPC procedures such as always wearing a hospital mask and practicing proper hand hygiene.
- For inpatients, emergency department and Intensive care units, 1 vaccinated visitor or 1 support person is allowed
- For end of life situations a limit of 5 consistent visitors (2 at a time) are allowed

### *Long-term care settings* [updated October 21, 2021]

- Including essential care visitors, a resident may choose up to 4 identified general visitors for indoor visits. Two may visit at the same time if they are from the same household.
- For indoor visits, visitors are required to undergo COVID-19 screening and temperature check, wear a mask continuously throughout the visit, practice proper hand hygiene.
- 6 outdoor visitors are allowed at once.

## Northwest Territories

### *Acute care settings* [updated October 21,2021]

- Inpatients can designate a maximum of 2 designated visitors however, only one may visit at a time.
- Visitors will be screened before coming into the health care facility.
- Visitors must stay a minimum of 2 metres apart, and adhere to IPC procedures such as hand hygiene, masking etc.
- Visitors are highly encouraged to be fully vaccinated but are not required to be.

### *Long-term care settings* [updated October 21,2021]

- Each resident is allowed to have two designated essential visitors.
- Only one essential visitor per visit is allowed.
- These two designated essential visitors should be 12 years of age or older.
- Every visit, visitors will need to be screened, temperature checked and follow IPC procedures.
- Visitors are highly encouraged to be fully vaccinated but are not required to be.

## Nunavut

### *All health and care settings* [Accessed October 21,2021]

- No mentioned policies

## Summary of Vaccine Mandates for Essential Care Partners

Province	Mandate	Acute care hospitals	LTC
Alberta	No	Vaccination is not mandatory, but is strongly recommended.	Vaccination is not mandatory, but is strongly recommended.
British Columbia	Yes	Effective October 26, 2021 full vaccination will be mandatory	Effective October 12, 2021 full vaccination against COVID-19 will be mandatory
Manitoba	No	Vaccination is not required for essential care partners. However, general visitor access is restricted for unvaccinated visitors.	Unvaccinated visitors may still visit LTC homes, however, vaccinated visitors have less restrictions.
New Brunswick	Yes	Effective November 19, 2021, Designated Support Persons will be required to show proof of vaccination	Effective November 19, 2021, Designated Support Persons will be required to show proof of vaccination
Newfoundland and Labrador	No	No information provided	Vaccinations are not required for LTC homes.
Northwest Territories	No	Vaccination is not mandatory, but is strongly recommended.	Vaccination is not mandatory, but is strongly recommended.
Nova Scotia	Yes	Effective October 13, 2021, most visitors and support people will be required to show proof of vaccination.	All visitors are strongly encouraged, but not required, to get vaccinated (August 9)
Nunavut	No	No information provided	No information provided
Ontario	No	There is no provincial mandate, but some hospitals have enacted mandates.	No information provided
Prince Edward Island	No	No information provided	Vaccination is not mandatory, however less restrictions are applied if vaccinated

Quebec	Yes	Effective October 15, 2021, proof of vaccination will be required	All visitors to LTC facilities will need to provide proof of vaccination
Saskatchewan	No	No information provided	Vaccinations are not mandatory
Yukon	No	Effective November 1, 2021, visitors will be required to show proof of vaccination. However, Designated Support Persons will not need to be vaccinated.	No mention of required vaccination for LTC facilities.

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