



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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## Committee Report

**To:** Chair and Members of the Information, Heritage and Seniors Committee  
**From:** Suzanne Dronick, Wellington Terrace LTCH Administrator  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 13, 2024  
**Subject:** Update on Enhanced Masking Measures in Long-term Care

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### Background:

On Monday March 4, 2024, the Ministry of Long-term Care (MLTC) released a memo announcing that effective immediately it will be ending the enhanced masking measures. Wellington Terrace is choosing to take a slower approach to this change in protocol. Therefore, at Wellington Terrace universal masking will remain in place until April 11, 2024. This decision has been made recognizing current outbreaks in our local Long-term Care Homes, acknowledging a 10-day incubation period after Easter, and recognizing typical infection control practices naturally transition to less measures at the end of flu season.

As required in the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Standard and the updated MLTC COVID-19 guidance document, masking in non-outbreak situations in LTC homes continues to be as follows:

- Required for staff, based on a point-of-care risk assessment before every resident interaction, and based on the return-to-work protocols.
- Staff may consider wearing a mask during prolonged direct resident care defined as one-on-one within two metres of an individual for fifteen minutes or longer.
- Recommended for visitors and caregivers, but not required.
- Homes are encouraged to implement “mask friendly” policies, including accommodating:
  - staff who prefer to continue to wear a mask beyond minimum requirements.
  - residents, or substitute decision makers, who request that a staff member wear a mask when providing care, in alignment with the Residents’ Bill of Rights, including the right to participate fully in making any decisions concerning any aspect of their care.

Homes continue to be required to follow all IPAC related requirements in the regulation and IPAC Standard and are encouraged to continue to strengthen foundational IPAC practices, employing multiple layers of protection, including:

- Continuing to build comprehensive IPAC programmes as required by the IPAC Standard.
- Encouraging residents, staff and caregivers to get vaccinated, as staying up to date with vaccines is the best way to prevent severe illness.
- Ensuring ready access to therapeutics and to pre-assess residents for eligibility for antivirals in advance.
- Self-monitoring for symptoms (i.e., passive screening) and staying home when sick.
- Ensuring that staff are trained to conduct a point-of-care risk assessment before each resident encounter and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Ensuring you have adequate PPE supplies.
- Conducting regular IPAC audits.

Homes are encouraged to continue to work with your local public health units on outbreak management, including universal masking during outbreaks, cohorting, isolation of cases, etc., as recommended in the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance for Public Health Units: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings.

**Strategic Action Plan:**

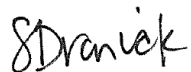
This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:

- Continue working to ensure all county residents have a safe place they can call home.

**Recommendation:**

That the Update on Enhanced Masking Measures in Long-term Care report be received as information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SDronick". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Suzanne Dronick  
Wellington Terrace LTCH Administrator