

## Media Release

February 25, 2022  
For Immediate Release

### UPDATE ON HOSPITAL POLICIES ON VISITOR VACCINATIONS

WINDSOR and LEAMINGTON, ON. \_ The frontline workforce of our Windsor-Essex hospitals, just like their family, friends and neighbours in the communities they serve, look forward to the next phase of Ontario's reopening plan which reduces certain restrictions effective March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. After two years of working in some of the most intense and challenging conditions of their careers in health care, we all look forward to opportunities to enjoy our off time to the fullest extent, get back to doing the things we love and reconnecting with loved ones.

As the province's reopening plan moves ahead, however, hospitals continue to provide life-saving care for many vulnerable patients. While we look forward to continued progress and stable and/or downward trends in the numbers of COVID-19 cases in our communities, we need to recognize that health care settings remain vulnerable to transmission of the virus to high-risk individuals, including through COVID-19 outbreaks which have recently continued to occur inside our facilities.

Unlike restaurants, gyms, retailers and other settings, given the population we serve, hospitals have a greater responsibility to monitor, assess and mitigate all risks to patients and staff. As such, **hospitals will continue with current visitor policies beyond March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**. Existing personal protective equipment (PPE) policies remain in effect. Please refer to our respective hospital websites for requirements at specific facilities

Please keep in mind that ALL hospitals, throughout the pandemic, have worked hard to allow visitation for our patients experiencing life altering illness, while maintaining safety of our staff, patients and the public.

We are encouraged at this stage of the pandemic that as a community, we are moving safely into a better place in terms of managing risks of COVID-19 transmission. However, we continue to promote the importance of vaccinations in keeping our communities safe and better protected from serious or critical illness. This particularly includes vaccinations of our younger population – according to the most recent statistics, the 5-11 age group has the lowest coverage rate for two vaccines (23.2%), followed by those in the 18-24 age group (76.7%) and 12-17 age group (78.9%).

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/bill.comeau/viz/OntarioRegionalVaccinationsbyAge/Dashboard1>).

In the meantime, we appreciate the public's patience and understanding of ongoing restrictions in hospital settings.

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