



February 2024

OLTCC is providing feedback to the Ministry's Technical Advisory Table with regard to which diagnostic tools would be most helpful in LTC to prevent unnecessary transfers, and how best to implement and support the addition of the diagnostic tools. OLTCC recommends the following bedside diagnostic laboratory modalities as being critical for LTC:

- Point-of-Care (POC) polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for urinary and respiratory infections
- POC International Normalized Ratio (INR).
- POC Creatinine.
- POC Complete Blood Count.
- POC electrolytes.

While appropriate training/instructions would provide our teams with the skills necessary to do POC testing, laboratory oversight may be necessary for the following:

- Cardiology interpretation of electrocardiograms (ECG) for homes that choose this tool.
- Determining whether results need to be verified by the lab or specimens discarded.
- A dedicated 24/7 support line for troubleshooting between the assigned lab and the home.
- Consistency in after-hours coverage providing verification of urgent abnormal results
- Quality assurance, machine calibration and troubleshooting problems.
- After hours acceptance of necessary testing (e.g. urine culture when a positive urinalysis is identified).

OLTCC is preparing comment on the Ministry of Long-Term Care's proposed amendments to Ontario Regulation 246/22. The comments are due March 10th and full details can be found [here](#).

The Ministry references the proposed changes as “part of an ongoing evolution of the governing framework intended to enhance the quality of care and life for residents in long-term care.” The proposed amendments include:

Changes to staffing qualifications for some roles to ensure requirements are proportionate with the responsibilities and accountabilities of the role.

- Support nursing students to work in long-term care homes as externs outside of clinical placements, including administering drugs and other potential functions.
- Permit RPNs to complete RAI-MDS assessments.
- Broaden provisions related to the pandemic framework to provide greater clarity to licensees on requirements in emergency situations and de-escalation to non-emergency situations. As well as considering a mechanism to trigger the potential use of these provisions in the future such as possible time-limited direction from the Minister.
- Require that a home's Residents' Council and Family Council be involved in the review of existing visitor policies and any future revisions.

- *Clarifying and Technical Amendments:*
 - The limited circumstances in which a licensee would not have to install a portable or window air conditioning unit.
 - The circumstances when a licensee must implement the heat-related illness prevention and management plan.
 - Consistency in language between the air conditioning and air temperature requirements.
 - Providing greater flexibility to support the designation of "imminent home closure" before or after a home's closure date has passed, refining the definition of "replacement home" to improve resident admissions.

OLTCC is also sending a letter to the Senate with regard to Bill c295, which proposes to amend the criminal code with regard to neglect of vulnerable adults. OLTCC is noting that while neglect or abuse of any kind is intolerable, the Bill does not support any efforts to improve staffing or the working environment in LTC, and instead perpetuates a negative portrayal that is counter-productive to the improvement of care and the atmosphere as a home and work environment. The letter is being written alongside other partners in LTC including Advantage Ontario.