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GTA

City estimates \$14.5M price tag to make city nursing homes safe against a second wave of COVID-19

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It will cost Toronto \$14.5 million to re-open its 10 nursing homes safely and prepare for a potential second wave of COVID-19, according to a report released today.

The measures being recommended include continuing to screen everyone for illness who enters the homes, including temperature checks, mandatory use of masks and other personal protective equipment for staff, maintaining physical distancing measures and limiting staff to working at a single location.

It also recommends expanding the use of technology to allow more virtual visits.

The report, by staff from the city's seniors services and long-term care division, was released at the COVID-19 briefing at city hall on Monday.

The report reviews what happened at the city's long-term care homes during the pandemic and makes 16 recommendations for action moving forward.

The most expensive is maintaining mandatory and full access to PPE, estimated at \$7.5 million a year, and maintaining active screening of staff, essential visitors and residents, with an estimated price tag of \$3.5 million a year.

"Implementation of these key recommendations will enable SSLTC to continue its proactive and nimble COVID-19 response, and ensure the city's long-term care homes are prepared for a potential second wave of COVID-19," according to the report.



City of Toronto
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Read the report on management of #COVID19 in the City's 10 long-term care homes. It outlines the response by staff prior and during the pandemic and recommendations on how best to adapt the City's long-term care homes after the pandemic. More info: [toronto.ca/home/covid-19/...](http://toronto.ca/home/covid-19/)



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The city took early action prior to the World Health Organization declaring a pandemic to ensure a safe environment for the 2,600 residents who live in the city's 10 long-term care homes, and the more than 3,300 people who work there, but despite best efforts, the virus proved difficult to contain, the report points out.

Three city homes, Seven Oaks, Kipling Acres and Lakeshore Lodge experienced significant outbreaks in the early stages of the pandemic. Working experience gained in the early outbreaks helped the city more effectively mitigate outbreaks in other city homes.

According to the report, as the homes gradually re-open, based on that early experience and on guidance from local and provincial health authorities, communal dining will resume, while maintaining physical distancing. So will resident programs, with a maximum of five residents per group. Medical and other service appointments will resume, although virtual consultations will be performed as needed.

Returning residents and new residents that test negative 24 hours prior to admission will be admitted.

At one point during the pandemic, all city long-term care homes reported residents or staff or both with the virus, according to a press release from the city. Today, 11 residents in three city homes are positive for COVID-19.

Also at the press conference, [Mayor John Tory](#) thanked [Premier Doug Ford](#) for the “careful and prudent” decision to not push Toronto into Phase 2 of the provincial reopening plan. [The Peel region and Windsor will also remain in Phase 1.](#)



David Rider

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New: Registrations open now for Toronto bars and restaurants interested in opening new patio space when city enters Stage 2 re-opening under city's CaféTO program. Details + online registration here [toronto.ca/home/covid-19/...](http://toronto.ca/home/covid-19/)

Restaurants and bars, along with their patios, remain closed for dine-in service due to provincial orders and public health recommendations. Restaurants with existing patios can open them once provincial orders are lifted and as long as they follow public health guidelines. If approved by Executive Committee, followed by Toronto City Council later this month, the CaféTO recommendations would make it easier for many restaurant and bar owners to open patios, expand them, and access additional space for physical distancing, in accordance with public health guidelines.

The proposed report recommends City staff work closely with qualifying local restaurant and bar operators to establish options for café configurations within the right-of-way, while also temporarily pausing certain bylaw elements for the 2020 patio season to ensure:

- rapid installation of permitted cafes while maintaining public safety
- access to restaurant and bar services and facilities for those dining outdoors
- permit and application fees are waived for approved cafes and
- accessibility and physical distancing requirements are met.

Local restaurants and bars can begin the process to register for the proposed new program to better understand requirements and start planning. Opening registration, including providing a new, straight-forward guidebook containing patio placement requirements for approved restaurant and bar operators, represents an important step in preparing for future direction by City Council. Staff continue to prepare now so the City can act quickly to help many qualifying restaurants and bars generate revenue this summer.

A cross-divisional action team from Toronto Public Health, Transportation Services, Economic Development, Municipal Licensing and Standards, City Planning, and Strategic Communications has been overseeing program development to ensure it's made available as soon as possible, pending committee and council consideration. Members of the group have been working closely with the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA), restaurant associations and other key stakeholders to urgently navigate all possible considerations while anticipating issues.

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Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto's public health chief, said keeping Toronto in Phase 1 was a reasonable decision.

"We are getting closer to our goal of 14 days of (daily new infection) decreases, but we are not quite there yet," de Villa said.

In Phase 2, residents will be able to eat at patio restaurants, get haircuts and shop in malls.

Sources have told the Star that July 26 is being eyed for Toronto entering Phase 2 if virus indicators continue to improve. On Monday, Toronto's seven-day average for new daily infections dropped to 98 from 116.

Tory urged restaurants and bars that want to claim public space to open or expand patios to prepare for Phase 2 by registering with CafeTO.

Business owners can apply to: install a new café on sidewalk in front of or beside their business or in front of an adjacent property; expand an existing sidewalk; or install a new patio in a curb lane of roadway.

Read more about: Global Health, John Tory

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