



THE ONTARIO

**caregiver**  
ORGANIZATION

ESSENTIAL CARE  
PARTNER SUPPORT  
HUB

## LEADING PRACTICES FOR ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNER PROGRAMS IN LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

This overview of leading practices demonstrates the key components of Essential Care Partner programs under each area of focus – **Identify**, **Include** and **Support** the essential care partner.

Identify the caregiver	Include the caregiver as part of the care team	Support the caregiver
<p><b>ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNERS ARE NOT VISITORS</b> Caregivers are recognized as essential care partners, and differentiated from general visitors.</p> <p><b>PATIENT DESIGNATION</b> All residents (or their substitute decision-makers) are empowered and encouraged to designate their essential care partner(s).</p> <p><b>DOCUMENTATION</b> Essential care partners are documented (e.g., in the electronic medical record (EMR), including their contact information, timing, and level of participation in various aspects of care.</p> <p><b>IDENTIFICATION</b> Essential Care Partner Identification (ID badge) is used to identify and formally recognize essential care partners.</p> <p><b>ADVANCE IDENTIFICATION</b> Residents with a planned admission are encouraged to identify their essential care partner(s) prior to admission.</p>	<p><b>POLICY</b> Organizational policies and practices enable the essential care partner open access to the care recipient (in accordance with patient wishes) and support essential care partner inclusion.</p> <p><b>STAFF EDUCATION &amp; TRAINING</b> Education and training is provided to all staff to understand the important role of essential care partners, and Essential Care Partner policies and practices.</p> <p><b>COMMUNICATION</b> Essential Care Partner policy and program information is pro-actively communicated to all staff, residents, families and essential care partners.</p> <p><b>SHARED COMMITMENT</b> Mutual expectation of responsibilities of essential care partners and other care team members are developed and defined in partnership with residents, care partners and staff, including level of essential care partner participation in different aspects of care.</p> <p><b>INTEGRATION</b> Essential care partners are integrated into point of care workflows and clinical pathways. Essential care partner tasks/time commitments are based on residents and care partner needs, abilities, comfort levels, and preferences.</p>	<p><b>ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNER ORIENTATION</b> There is a process for on-boarding and orienting essential care partners.</p> <p><b>ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNER EDUCATION &amp; TRAINING</b> Essential care partners are provided education and training on key aspects of their role, including how they may choose to participate in care, and updated infection prevention and control protocols.</p> <p><b>RAPID APPEALS</b> A rapid appeals process is in place in regard to essential care partner identification and inclusion.</p> <p><b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b> Support services are available for essential care partners to answer questions and help them take care of their own needs while they are providing essential care.</p> <p><b>LINK TO SUPPORT</b> Essential care partners are provided and/or linked to supports and resources for their own well-being.</p>