

Questions and Answers Document

Ontario Increasing the Number of Reunification Priority Access Beds (RPABs)

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Contents

What is changing and why now?..... 2

What are RPABs? 2

Which LTC homes will be getting the additional designation?..... 2

How does this affect me or my loved one? 2

Are all spouses/partners able to seek admission to a RPAB?..... 3

How are applicants determined to be in crisis? 3

What if I am an applicant not in a crisis and not seeking reunification with my spouse/partner, will this additional RPABs designation unfairly bump or deprioritize me?..... 4

If a crisis applicant on the RPABs waitlist accepts a regular long-stay program bed at another LTC home, can they remain on the RPAB waitlist for future reunification?..... 4

If a resident in a RPAB is admitted to another LTC home due to changing needs, does the RPAB designation move with them? 4

Who can I contact for further information?..... 4

What is changing and why now?

Answer: In recognition of the importance of better supporting spouses/partners in crisis (category 1) on the waiting list, an additional two (2) RPABs are being designated for a total of four (4) RPABs in every long-term care (LTC) home in Ontario with long-stay beds. This will help support the reunification of spouses/partners in crisis in LTC homes. Existing RPAB eligibility and placement requirements will continue to apply.

What are RPABs?

Answer: RPAB stands for **Reunification Priority Access Bed**. RPABs are accessible only to applicants in category 1 (crisis) on the waiting list seeking reunification in a LTC home where their spouse/partner currently resides as a long-stay resident. Applicants on the RPAB waiting list have priority to a vacant RPAB. However, if there is no matching applicant when a vacant RPAB becomes available, the next highest-ranking applicant from the regular long-stay waitlist would be offered admission to the bed.

Which LTC homes will be getting the additional designation?

Answer: Every LTC home with long-stay beds will have an additional two (2) long-stay program beds designated as RPABs for a **total of four (4) RPABs** to better support faster reunification of spouses/partners who are in crisis on the waiting list and meet the other eligibility criteria for an RPAB.

Please note that the Regulation sets out that the Director may designate a specified number of long-stay program beds in a long-term care home as RPABs under [subsection 226 \(1\)](#). Homes with only short stay beds (such as convalescent care or interim beds) will not receive RPABs.

How does this affect me or my loved one?

Answer: RPABs are accessible only to spouses/partners in crisis seeking reunification. If you are seeking reunification in an LTC home where your spouse/partner currently resides as a long-stay resident and you are in crisis as a result of your condition or circumstances, you should speak to Ontario Health atHome placement co-ordinator for more information on whether you are eligible to apply for an RPAB in the LTC home where your spouse/partner resides.

Are all spouses/partners able to seek admission to a RPAB?

Answer:

The *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021* (FLTCA), spouse is defined under the *Family Law Act* as meaning either of two persons who,

- a) are married to each other, or
- b) have together entered into a marriage that is voidable or void, in good faith on the part of a person relying on this clause to assert any right.

The FLTCA further defines spouse as meaning either of two persons who live together in a conjugal relationship outside marriage.

Under the Regulation, partner means “either of two persons who have lived together for at least one year and who have a close personal relationship that is of primary importance in both persons’ lives.”

LTC applicants seeking reunification with a spouse/partner living in a LTC home as a long-stay resident must meet certain eligibility criteria to seek admission to an RPAB. This includes meeting the requirements to be placed in the crisis category as well as needing to apply for an RPAB.

Applicants who are eligible for LTC, including because they have 24/7 care needs, and seeking to reunify with their partner in LTC, but are **not** considered crisis placements, are placed in category 2 of the waitlist. This maintains the current priority for spouses/partners not in crisis, and allows those without care needs to seek admission to a regular long-stay bed based on the current waiting list categories set out in the Regulation.

How are applicants determined to be in crisis?

Answer: Ontario Health atHome placement co-ordinators place an applicant in Category 1 on the waiting list for a long-term care home if they determine that they require immediate admission as a result of a crisis arising from the applicant's condition or circumstances. Please contact your Ontario Health atHome placement co-ordinator, and see [section 188 of the Regulation](#) for further details.

What if I am an applicant not in a crisis and not seeking reunification with my spouse/partner, will this additional RPABs designation unfairly bump or deprioritize me?

Answer: No change has been made to requirements or processes regarding waitlist prioritization. The current waitlist prioritization continues to be based on the current waiting list categories and rankings set out in the law.

Applicants on the RPAB wait list have priority for RPABs when a RPAB becomes vacant in the LTC home. However, if there is no applicant waiting for a RPAB, the next highest eligible person on the LTC home's waitlist waiting for a regular long-stay bed is offered admission. This ensures continued flow of applicants seeking admission into the LTC home.

If a crisis applicant on the RPABs waitlist accepts a regular long-stay program bed at another LTC home, can they remain on the RPAB waitlist for future reunification?

Answer: Yes, the applicant may remain on the RPAB waiting list after accepting a bed at another LTC home, so long as they continue to meet the eligibility requirements to be placed on the RPAB waiting list as determined by the Ontario Health atHome placement co-ordinator in accordance with the Regulation.

If a resident in a RPAB is admitted to another LTC home due to changing needs, does the RPAB designation move with them?

Answer: No, the designation would not move with the applicant to a different home.

Who can I contact for further information?

Answer: For placement-related matters, please contact your Ontario Health atHome placement co-ordinator. For matters related to a particular home, please contact your administrator. All other inquiries may be directed to the ministry at ltc.info@ontario.ca.