

## Local long-term care homes see outbreaks of COVID-19

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Outbreaks of COVID-19 have been declared at Shelburne's two long termcare homes.

According to Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health outbreaks were declared on Dec. 31 at Dufferin Oaks, located at 151 Centre Street, and Shelburne Long Term Care Home and Retirement Community, located at 200 Robert Street.

Southbridge Care Homes, who operates Shelburne Long Term Care Home and Retirement Community, reported in their daily COVID-19 home status updates that 11 residents and four staff members tested positive for COVID-19.

Southbridge Care Homes said the residents and staff members that tested positive are fully vaccinated and that the staff members are currently isolating at home.

Dufferin Oaks released a public notice on Dec. 31 identifying the outbreak was declared on the third floor of the residence. At the time of the initial outbreak no residents were affected.

Jennifer Power, director of care at Dufferin Oaks, told the Free Press in an email that one resident had tested positive for COVID-19 at the home following the outbreak, but has since resolved. She noted that three other residents were tested and found to be negative through a PCR test.

While the number of positive cases have remained low in Dufferin Oak's resident's population since the outbreak, large community spread of the virus has affected the homes staff.

Power said that a total of 15 staff members have been affected.

As a result of the outbreak, Dufferin Oaks has implemented health measures on visitation and access to the home including allowing only one essential caregiver per resident to visit at a time, and asking the visits be limited once per day.

"We implement all safety measures as required by Public Health and we continue to have daily discussion with Public Health pertaining to our outbreak," said Power.

The outbreaks of COVID-19 at the two long-term care homes in Shelburne are among a number of those that have been declared by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health within the last month. As of Jan. 11, WDG Public Health has declared outbreaks at 21 long term care homes in the region.

The public health region has also seen a steady rise in COVID-19 cases, with the onset of the highly contagious omicron variant. WDG Public Health reported 1,500 active cases of COVID-19 in the region on Wednesday with over 300 of those in Dufferin County and 60 in the Town of Shelburne.