

Pandemic Plan - When COVID- 19 Symptoms Begin to Show

Preamble – To outline what to do when symptoms show on Staff or Client while working.

Reporting Positive Screening: Staff MUST contact their local public health unit to report a staff member or resident suspected to have COVID-19. The local public health unit will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent further spread in the residential setting.

STAFF:

- Staff should check for signs of illness compatible with COVID-19 before each shift using the self assessment tool provided by the Ministry of Health.
- Staff must complete a staff screening tool when arriving on shift. Individuals should follow the directions provided by the self-assessment tool.
- Staff who become unwell while at work must notify their manager/on call immediately and separate themselves from others.
 - They need to put on a mask and gloves and remain separated from others in the home.
 - Replacement staff will need to be found IMMEDIATELY so the unwell staff can leave.
 - They will need to go home (avoiding public transit) and contact their primary care provider, Telehealth (1-866-797-0000) or the local public health unit.
 - The work location will need to be fully sanitized once the unwell staff has left.
 - Staff will advise health care providers at the Assessment Centre that they work with a vulnerable population in a residential setting.
 - If COVID-19 is suspected or diagnosed in staff, return to work will be determined in consultation with their health care provider and the local public health unit.
 - Staff must notify their manager prior to return to work and provide documentation to support clearance to return.
 - Individuals who are positive for COVID-19 and are free of symptoms for 14 days after the onset of the symptoms can return to work.

CLIENTS:

When an individual reports or shows symptoms of COVID-19 or they have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, they must be isolated immediately. Staff working with them will have to wear proper PPE until the individual is cleared. Call their primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 and tell them that the person lives in a group home or other residential setting.

Placement in Isolation in the Residence:

- Choose a room in the residence with a door that can be closed to separate unwell residents (bedroom).
- This is where the unwell individual will remain while in isolation for 14 days or until cleared by a health care provider or a COVID 19 test comes back as negative.

- Identify a separate bathroom for the unwell individual to use, if possible.
- If a private bathroom is not available, consider developing a schedule for use with the unwell individual going last, followed by a thorough cleaning of the bathroom every time the unwell individual goes into it.
- Depending on the individual environment and the recommendation of Public Health, hotels or other accommodation may be used to improve isolation of the individuals.

COVID-19 Testing:

- If the unwell individual has symptoms that may be COVID-19 and the residential setting staff have health questions, call the resident's doctor/NP (if permitted) or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) and tell them that the person lives in a group home or other residential setting.
- Testing should be arranged by calling the local public health unit. Request testing in home if possible.
- If staff are advised to transport the individual to an Assessment Centre, arrange private transportation (no public transit is allowed) and have the individual wear a surgical/procedure mask and gloves, sit alone in the backseat and open the car windows if possible. The driver of the vehicle should wear a mask and gloves as well.
- Residents or staff on behalf of the client will advise health care providers at the Assessment Centre that they are a resident in a group residential setting.

Recovery at Home:

- Individuals who have mild to moderate symptoms may recover at home in the residential setting at the advice of a medical professional.
- They must remain in their room, receive meals in their room and should not share a bathroom with others (see above).
- They will be monitored several times a day to ensure that their symptoms do not worsen.
- Hotels or other accommodation may be utilized to ensure isolation if recommended by public Health.
- If the unwell individual gets worse and needs to go to the hospital because of severe symptoms (e.g., severe difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, very hard time waking up, confusion, loss of consciousness), call 911 and inform them that the individual is suspected/confirmed of having COVID-19 so that the hospital can be notified and the paramedics can take the necessary precautions.

Caregiving and Infection:

- Limit the number of staff providing care to the individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Staff will perform regular hand hygiene and wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required.
- If close contact (less than 2 metres or 6 feet) with the individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is required for direct care (e.g., bathing, toileting), use Droplet and Contact Precautions. (see below)

Droplet and Contact Precautions include using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Before using PPE, staff should be familiar with how to safely put it on and take it off. Detailed instructions to be sent to all homes

- When in close contact (less than 2 metres) with the ill or suspected ill person wear Surgical/procedure masks. These provide a physical barrier that helps prevent the transmission of the virus by blocking respiratory droplets propelled by coughing, sneezing and talking.
- Disposable single use gloves will be worn when in direct contact with the ill or suspected ill person, cleaning contaminated surfaces, and handling items soiled with body fluids.
- Isolation gown when skin or clothing may become contaminated. Reusable gowns may be used; however, they must be laundered with soap and warm water (60-90°C) after each use
- Wear a face shield in addition to the surgical mask for care or activities likely to generate splashes or sprays of body fluids. Eye protection such as goggles are only effective if the proper mask (N95) is in use.

Tasks that do not involve close contact and direct care with the person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 do not require PPE, however Avenue II may require cloth masks to be worn by all in the location at all times including residents

Tasks that require close contact and direct care with individuals who are otherwise healthy and displaying no symptoms of COVID-19 do not require additional PPE than what is normally used however as per our PPE protocol staff may elect to wear cloth masks and face shields. They may not wear surgical masks as those are reserved for appropriate situations and are restricted items by the Province of Ontario

Cleaning required when caring for a resident with suspected or confirmed COVID-19:

- The room the unwell individual is in will be cleaned/sanitized twice per day, or more as needed.
- The washroom the unwell individual uses will be cleaned/sanitized after each use.
- The lid of the toilet will be down before flushing to prevent contamination of the environment.
- Disposable contaminated items including used PPE should be placed in a closed bag and placed with other household waste.
- Laundry from the unwell resident will be done daily with warm water (60-90°C), and thoroughly dry the laundry.
- DO NOT mix the unwell individual's laundry with other laundry from the house.
- Staff will wear gloves and a mask when handling the dirty laundry from unwell individuals and keep it away from the body.
- If the laundry hamper holding the contaminated laundry will be disinfected each time laundry is done.