Information for staff:

Long term care and retirement homes

Precautions for administrators

The Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a directive under the Health Protection and Promotion Act to LTC homes. The following is a summary. Review the full directives document.

This directive requires LTC homes to immediately implement these precautions and procedures for residents:

- **Active screening** twice daily of all staff and essential visitors entering the home for COVID-19
- Active screening twice daily of all residents
- All new resident admissions and re-admissions will be tested for COVID-19 and placed in self-isolation for 14 days
- Residents should not be permitted to leave the home for short-stay absences to visit family and friends
- All staff and essential visitors are to wear a procedure mask at all times during the duration of shifts or resident visits, regardless of whether the home is in outbreak or not. When masks are removed (i.e., during lunch break), staff must remain 2 metres away from other staff.
- LTC homes must be closed to visitors (except for essential visitors and essential service providers)
- To minimize risk to patients of exposure to COVID-19, employees have been directed to limit work at one facility.
- Questions or concerns about this directive can be directed to the Ministry’s Health Care Provider Hotline (1-866-212-2272) or emergencymanagement.moh@ontario.ca.

Dropping off specimens

All LTC homes and retirement home staff can drop off specimens at the Fairview Clinic (325 Central Parkway West) only on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. to be couriered to the Public Health Ontario Labs.
Properly **sealed specimens** must be received at the clinic before 11 a.m.

The name of the facility should be indicated on the requisition and the Outbreak Number must be clearly marked on all respiratory samples sent to ensure prioritization at the lab.

**Procedures for separating residents**

If a resident develops COVID-19 symptoms, the resident is to wear a procedure mask (if tolerated) and placed in a private room to wait for further assessment.

Patient-contact surfaces that are within 2 metres of a person who has screened positive should be disinfected as soon as possible.

**How Peel Public Health is notified of potential cases**

COVID-19 outbreaks should be identified, reported and actioned in the same way as all other respiratory outbreaks.

LTC and retirement homes should notify Peel Public Health immediately at 905-799-7700 to report a resident or staff who is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

An outbreak number will be provided to be used on all sample testing to be done in the LTC home.

COVID-19 testing is added to all respiratory specimens submitted to Public Health Lab Ontario – there is not a separate requisition or test required.

The name of the facility should be indicated on the requisition and the outbreak number must be clearly marked on all respiratory samples to ensure prioritization at the lab.

**Handling new admissions and re-admissions**

LTC homes must conduct active screening (most ideally, by telephone) for all new admissions (from the community), re-admissions or residents returning to the home.
Residents should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms or any travel history in the past 14 days or for exposure to probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Currently, the Ministry of Health has requested hospitals to temporarily stop new admissions to LTC homes.

Hospitals may discharge patients to LTC homes where:

- It is a readmission to long-term care (the resident is returning to their home)
- The receiving home is NOT in a COVID-19 outbreak
- The resident has been tested for COVID-19 at point of discharge, has a negative result and is transferred to the home within 24 hours of receiving the result
- The receiving home has a plan to ensure that the resident being readmitted can complete 14-days of self-isolation

Admissions from the community to LTC homes should continue under the following circumstances:

- The receiving home is not in a COVID-19 outbreak
- The resident has been tested for COVID-19, has a negative result and is transferred to the home within 24 hours of receiving the result
- The receiving home has a plan to ensure that the resident being admitted can complete 14-days of self-isolation

LTC homes are required to consult with Peel Public Health if an in-coming resident from the community or returning resident from hospital is showing COVID-19 symptoms, has a travel history outside of Canada, or reports other potential exposure to COVID-19.

LTC and retirement homes should notify Peel Public Health immediately at 905-799-7700 to report a resident or staff who is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Testing residents for COVID-19

Aside from presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever, some may present with atypical symptoms, such as unexplained fatigue, delirium, falls, acute functional decline, exacerbation of chronic conditions, chills, headaches, croup.
LTC homes and retirement homes should notify Peel Public Health immediately at 905-799-7700 if a resident is suspected of having COVID-19.

An outbreak number will be provided for testing to be done in the LTC home.

Healthcare workers can safely collect nasopharyngeal and throat swabs using droplet and contact precautions.

All respiratory virus specimens collected for acute respiratory illness or outbreaks will automatically be tested for COVID-19 at the laboratory.

There is no change to usual practices for submitting respiratory outbreak specimens. The name of the facility should be indicated on the requisition and the outbreak number must be clearly marked on all respiratory samples to ensure prioritization at the lab.

For the latest updates on COVID-19 in Peel, visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus