

To: Long-Term Care, Retirement Homes, Congregate Living Settings, and Shelters

Subject: Workplace High Risk Contacts and Work Self-Isolation

December 31, 2021

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases locally and in Ontario, and the emergence of the Omicron variant, Public Health will be supporting organizations to make their own assessment and decisions regarding critical staffing needs. The following information will support organizations as work self-isolation in high-risk congregate living settings is considered.

Action:

Identification of Workplace High Risk Contacts

Where a staff tests positive on a rapid antigen test or PCR test; it is your responsibility to assess high risk contacts in your facility. This includes other staff AND residents who may have been exposed to the staff who tested positive. You are required to do the following PRIOR to calling public health:

- Determine period of Communicability (POC) (48hrs prior to onset of symptoms or from positive test date in an asymptomatic person)
- Assess if positive individual worked during the POC.
 - If YES:
 - Determine high risk contacts (this includes residents and staff) using the following criteria:
 - No eye protection and/or mask worn at time of exposure.
 - Less than 6ft physical distancing
 - Longer than 15 minutes in duration in a day
 - Isolate all high risk contacts that have been identified. Resident that have been identified as high risk contacts must be placed under droplet and contact precautions.
 - Increase surveillance in the home to twice daily
 - Send email to facilities@hpph.ca, HPPH will direct testing requirements. There may be up to a 24-48hr delay in response at this time.
 - If NO: Increase surveillance in the home to twice daily and report to local public health.

Staff Contingency Planning

Plan for critical staffing shortages and ensure a robust contingency plan that includes:

- Identification of critical staff levels and when contingency plan will be activated
- Confirming available supports through the organization and community partners
- Determining when work self-isolation is required to support operations
- Activating all other staffing options prior to approving work self-isolation

Work Self Isolation

It is the responsibility of the home to consider level of risk when determining approval and assignment for work self-isolation. Follow requirements and guidance within Directive 3. The following requirements must be in place prior to approving work self-isolation of any individual:

- Received a minimum of two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine 14 days prior to work
- Must not be symptomatic and is monitored twice daily, including temperature checks
- Travels to and from work in a private vehicle
- Adheres to self-isolation at home, when outside of the workplace
- Performs PCR testing immediately and again on day 7 from last exposure
- Performs RAT daily, prior to coming to work, for 10 days from last exposure to the case (Test-to-stay approach)
- If symptoms develop, the staff member must be tested and self-isolate immediately
- In long-term care homes, staff may only return to work, after an initial negative PCR test

Note:

- Any staff member with ongoing exposure to a case (i.e. household contact of a case) may return to work on work self-isolation for a full 20 days from the date on which the household case became symptomatic (or from the date of the positive test result).
- The testing plan for these individuals with ongoing exposure includes:
 - PCR test on day 0, on or after day 7, and on or after day 14/15
 - RAT daily while exposure is ongoing and daily for 10 days after last exposure