

April 24, 2021

Dear Home Care Provider Agencies:

Public Health Sudbury & Districts is observing an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in health care agency staff and clients who live in their private homes and receive home health care services. This is particularly concerning in the context of COVID-19 Variants of Concern circulating within our communities as these are more easily transmitted and can result in adverse health outcomes for those infected.

Provincial measures are in place under [Directive #3](#) issued by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health related to Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), and routine screening of residents, staff, and visitors of Long-Term Care Homes, as well as routine testing of all staff and visitors at these facilities. Retirement Homes are expected to take all reasonable steps required to follow any directive pertaining to COVID-19 that is issued to Long-Term Care Homes.

Though a provincial directive is not currently in place for staff and clients of homes health care services, it is essential that all follow the measures outlined within the [Guidance for Home and Community Care Providers](#). Please note that health care agency staff working in community within private residences are expected to practice the following measures at all times:

- Carefully screen for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering each home of a client. Seek testing and immediately self-isolate should even one symptom of COVID-19 present.
- Follow consistent and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) based on point of care risk assessment. At a minimum this includes use of a medical grade mask and eye protection at all times within client homes. Employers should provide staff with a sufficient supply of PPE and training for appropriate use. Employers should routinely conduct audits to ensure proper use of PPE by staff.
- Practice meticulous adherence to Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) best practices.
- Screen all clients prior to each interaction.
- Supply and encourage clients to wear a face covering as tolerated.

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Further, home health care agencies who provide services within private residences are strongly encouraged to implement privately initiated testing of staff twice weekly for those staff who are not already tested at least at the frequency to access Long-Term Care Homes.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts is available to provide IPAC consultations by calling 705.522.9200, ext. 1090 or [IPAC\\_Congregate\\_Team@phsd.ca](mailto:IPAC_Congregate_Team@phsd.ca).

Sincerely,

*Original Signed By*

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

PS:ldp

cc: Ministry of Health  
Ontario Health North