

**Ministry of Health**

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**Ministère de la Santé**

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June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Medical Officers of Health  
Associate Medical Officers of Health  
IPAC Medical Directors

**RE:** Provincial Recommendations and Directive #5

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Dear colleagues,

I am writing to confirm provincial recommendations and Directive 5 in follow up to the June 14<sup>th</sup> communication from Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the Medical Officer of Health for Niagara Region, regarding recommended use of N95 respirators in long-term care and retirement homes (attached). I understand that this has caused significant confusion and consternation.

To be clear, the Ontario Ministry of Health bases provincial infection prevention and control (IPAC) policy on recommendations from Public Health Ontario (PHO) and the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). They have reviewed the evidence in its totality, ascertained the conflicts of interest of those experts they consulted with and engaged a broad group of experts, including those with opposing views. The provincial policy recommends all health care providers conduct point of care risk assessment and use personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the task. For patients with suspect or proven COVID-19 infection, Droplet and Contact precautions are recommended for routine care (excluding aerosol-generating medical procedures) as described in the link below. Dr. Hirji's recommendations are not in agreement with provincial recommendations and the Ministry of Health's Directive 5.

IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals  
(publichealthontario.ca)

In addition, the IPAC medical directors of Ontario have been meeting regularly throughout the pandemic and are unanimous in recommending Droplet and Contact precautions for patients with suspect or proven COVID-19.

Note that a local Medical Officer of Health (MOH) may issue recommendations that go beyond provincial policy based on his/her assessment of the situation. In these circumstances it is recommended that the facilities comply with the local MOH's recommendations.

Dr. Hirji has agreed to add the following statement at the top of all communications on this matter.

“Please note that the Ministry of Health’s Directive 5 is the provincial baseline standard for provision of personal protective equipment for hospitals, long-term care homes and retirement homes during COVID-19.”

Of course, we will continue to work with PHO and PIDAC to actively monitor the relevant literature and update our recommendations as appropriate.

I trust this clarifies the issue.

Regards,

***Original signed by Dr. Barbara Yaffe***

Barbara Yaffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

- c. Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Jacqueline Cureton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility