

Memo

To: Congregate Living Settings

From: Sarah Titmus, Program Manager – COVID Response

Date: May 13, 2022

Re: HNHU COVID-19 case management, new line list template and reminders

Dear Congregate Living Setting Colleagues:

HNHU would like to provide a number of updates and reminders related to COVID-19 and respiratory illness.

Reporting to Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit

On April 19, 2022, the Ministry of Health released updated [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#). A significant change is that there are no PHU requirements for individual level case follow up for case management. HNHU is updating our practice to align with Ministry guidelines. As of May 12, 2022 HNHU will no longer be calling individual COVID-19 cases for case management.

Highest risk settings should notify Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit when they have suspect or confirmed outbreak.

- A **suspect COVID-19 outbreak** in a congregate living setting is defined as one positive PCR test OR rapid molecular OR rapid antigen test in a client.
- A **confirmed COVID-19 outbreak** in a CLS is defined as two or more clients and/or staff (or other visitors) in a congregate living setting with a positive PCR test OR rapid molecular test OR rapid antigen test AND with an epidemiological link* within a 10-day period.
*epidemiological link defined as reasonable evidence of transmission between clients/staff/other visitors AND there is a risk of transmission of COVID-19 to other clients with the congregate living setting.

HNHU kindly asks that you continue to notify the health unit of any positive PCR or rapid test in a client in your homes and any time two or more staff have a positive test where the transmission may have occurred from one staff to another. Please call the health unit Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm at 519-426-6170 ext. 9999 or call your public health nurse contact directly. For after-hours reporting, call our emergency number at 1-877-298-5888.

Updated COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations

On March 30, 2022, the Ministry of Health released updated guidance for congregate living for vulnerable populations. Highlight of the changes include

- Updated outbreak definitions (see above).
- Close contacts within the congregate living setting, regardless of vaccination status, now isolate in droplet and contact precautions for a minimum of 5 days from last contact with case. This is followed by 5 days of masking and physical distancing when outside the home and in shared areas inside the home (except when required to remove. E.g., sleeping and eating). Close contacts should have symptoms monitored for 10 days from last contact.
- Close contacts who live in a CLS are recommended to be tested by PCR on/after Day 3 from last exposure to a positive case before ending their 5-day self-isolation.
- Rapid antigen tests are not intended for diagnostic purposes in highest risk settings; however, they may be used to facilitate case, contact, and outbreak management. The results of a RAT may be used to declare an outbreak while awaiting PCR diagnostic testing.

New Line List Template for COVID-19

HNHU has updated our line listing template to a fillable PDF form. The new line listing is attached and can be found on HNNU's website <https://hnhu.org/health-topic/highest-risk-settings/>

Reminder: Notifying Physicians/Healthcare Providers

HNHU would like to remind LTC/RHs to please follow your process of appropriate notification of resident's healthcare providers when illness is diagnosed. This is especially relevant as antiviral treatment, Paxlovid, is available for higher-risk individuals with COVID-19 and needs to be initiated within 5 days of symptom onset.

Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses

The Ministry of Health has changed its language from "fully vaccinated" to "up to date" when referring to COVID-19 vaccination status.

- **Up to date** means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

Please update vaccine records to reflect this so that the information is ready when needed for outbreak management. Please refer to [Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses](#) for more information.

Reminder from Public Health Labs

Public Health Labs would like to remind facilities of a few items for ordering tests appropriately. If your CLS does not order tests, consider sharing these reminders with the physicians who order tests for your clients.

- Please do not photocopy the requisition. Respiratory viruses should only be checked on the requisition when required and appropriate and not photocopied for all residents in a facility.
- A reminder that MRVP should be ordered on up to four symptomatic cases in an outbreak. If additional tests are required due to spread, suspect resistance, etc. call Public Health Ontario to arrange testing.
- Please do not order multiplex respiratory virus PCR (MRVP) on asymptomatic clients.

For questions, please contact our COVID-19 hotline at 519-426-6170 ext. 9999.