

# WDGPH COVID-19 Tabletop Exercise - Tip Sheet

November 2020

WDG Public Health conducted three COVID-19 tabletop exercises with Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and other Congregate Settings in Wellington and Guelph during September and October 2020. This exercise provided a safe environment for facilities and supporting partner organizations to discuss and run through potential scenarios together and assess their emergency plans and procedures in relation to a COVID-19 outbreak.

Feedback from participants about this exercise highlighted that they felt more prepared to respond to a COVID-19 outbreak, and that they learned new information and ideas from other facilities and agencies. This document pulls together some of the ideas and tips that were shared during this exercise. Please refer to the [slides for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes](#) and the [slides for Other Congregate Settings](#), to review the scenario, inputs and questions that were asked throughout the exercise to help prepare for a COVID-19 outbreak.

## Symptomatic residents

What are the first steps to manage the situation?

1. Confirm ill residents are isolated in droplet contact precautions and that ill staff are off of work.
2. Call WDGPH to report and discuss next steps (1-800-265-7293 ext. 4752 or after-hours 1-877-884-8653). Have a checklist of information available to provide when requested:

### **Residents:**

- Number of residents ill and whether they have a roommate?
- Symptoms and onset date?
- Hospitalizations?
- Total number of residents in the facility?
- Any recent short stay absence?

### **Layout:**

- Are bedrooms shared? What is the room breakdown (private vs. shared)
- How many floors?
- Are washrooms shared?
- Can areas be separated from each other?

### **Testing:**

- Are there any individuals unable to be tested?
- Can ill individuals be brought to an assessment centre for testing?
- Are there mobility or transportation issues?
- Is there registered staff with a medical directive onsite to help with testing
- If testing completed onsite – are there swabs onsite?

### **Staff:**

- Are there symptomatic staff?
- If yes, what is the last day worked? Have they been tested for COVID? Have the results been shared with management?

## **Testing**

How would your staff arrange for testing?

Information to have ready if EMS is assisting with testing:

- Demographic information (i.e. full name, date of birth etc.)
- Primary care provider name, address and CPSO number in the cc section
- Valid health card number (note: red and white health cards are no longer valid)

If testing is conducted onsite:

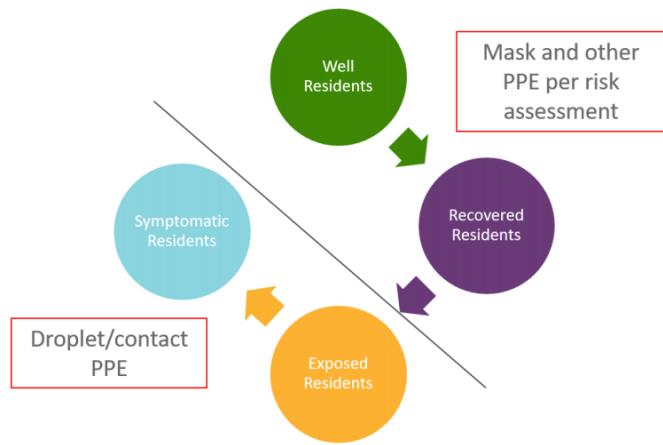
1. Check the expiration dates for the NP swabs.
2. Have enough NP swabs pre-ordered and onsite in the event they are needed.
3. If also testing for other respiratory viruses, check the swabs online via the Public Health Ontario Laboratory to confirm if the swabs can be used for other viruses.
4. Have electronic or printed copies of the current requisition available.
5. When a swab is collected, have 2 identifiers on the swab and make sure this matches the lab requisition.
6. Call WDG Public Health call centre (1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006) or after-hours number for swab pick up.

## **Cohorting**

How do you cohort residents and staff?

- Prepare a cohorting plan in advance and implement the following principles:
  - No more than 2 residents are permitted to share a room (newly created rooms) as per Directive #3 for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes
  - COVID positive residents cannot share a washroom unless the other individual is also COVID positive
  - Symptomatic residents should be separated from those who are asymptomatic
  - Staff should be cohorted or move from well resident to symptomatic resident to COVID positive resident

## Example of Flow for Providing Care to Cohorts



Source: PHO webinar- Healthcare worker PPE use and cohorting in long-term care and retirement homes (May 26, 2020) slide 32 <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/event-presentations/covid-19-webinar-healthcare-worker-ppe-use-cohorting-ltcrh.pdf?la=en>

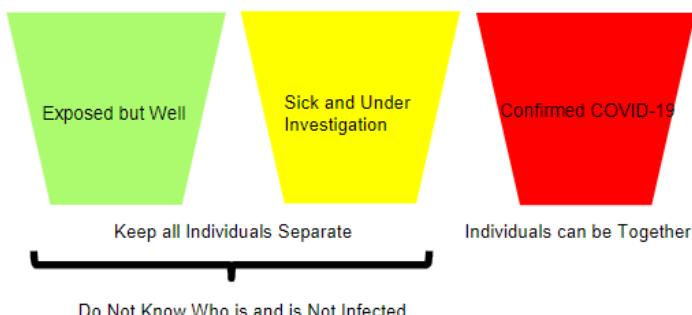
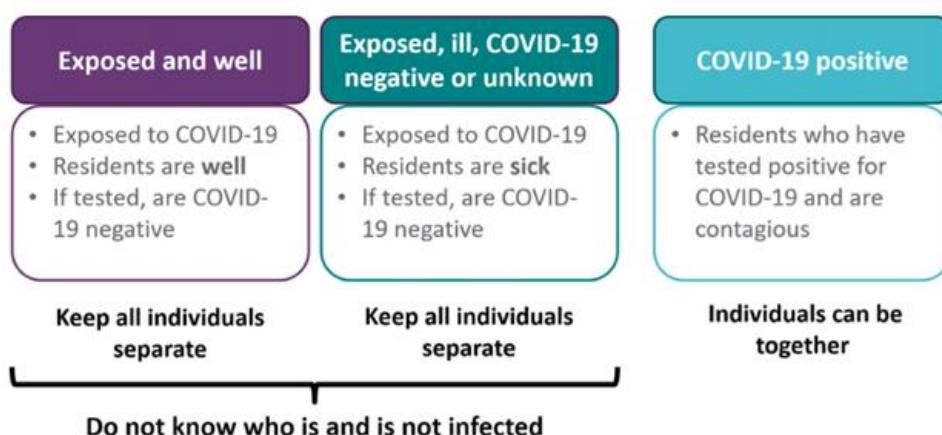


Image Source: PHO Webinar - Foundations of COVID-19 Prevention and Control for Congregate Settings (May 7, 2020)



Source: PHO webinar - Cohorting During a COVID-19 Outbreak in a Congregate Living Setting webinar (July 21, 2020)

## Staffing

Tips to assist with staffing shortages:

- Crosstrain staff
- Create job descriptions and duties in advance (i.e. environmental cleaning and disinfection checklist)
- Consider creating an onboarding or orientation package for new staff or volunteers. RNAO resource for onboarding staff was shared:  
<https://rnao.ca/covid19/support-long-term-care-and-retirement-homes>
- Determine minimum staffing level requirements (what can be dropped); create a contingency plan
- Determine if roles can be outsourced (i.e. food, housekeeping) to free up staff
- Create an internal surge plan (i.e. where to pull staff from – administration, management, other homes, other counsellors?)
- Utilize staffing portals/agencies (if applicable)
- Job posting promotion on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook community groups) has been successful for some facilities.
  - o Full time hours and longer length contracts may be helpful for recruitment
- Reach out to partners (e.g., LHIN, OH, OHT/FHT, Hospital) – Partners can try to extend or expand contracted service providers or potentially re-deploy staff (try to create full-time shifts when possible).
  - o Lead for local support team in Guelph and Area: Emmi Perkins  
[Emmi.Perkins@guelphfht.com](mailto:Emmi.Perkins@guelphfht.com)
  - o Lead for local support team in Rural Wellington: Karen Armstrong  
[KArmstrong@mountforestfht.com](mailto:KArmstrong@mountforestfht.com)
- If in critical staffing need, partners can connect with IMS leads for additional support.

## Personal Protective Equipment

Tips to assist with PPE shortages:

- Use a broad approach to secure PPE, pull from as many sources as possible. Do not rely on one supplier
- Use an inventory system for current supplies to flag when supplies are running low
- Contact WDGPH or other community partners (local support leads listed above) if the facility has a shortage of PPE and challenges securing additional PPE
- Link to access emergency PPE: <https://hmmscovid19.ca/>

## Decanting

Tips for preparing for decanting:

- Create a criteria that can be used to evaluate whether a resident/individual supported is a candidate for decanting in the event of a crisis and consider:
  - o Safety

- Equipment required and availability
- Products required and availability
- Medication requirements
- Determine the individual's needs
- Ensure care plans or advanced care plans are available and up to date
- Determine the family member/caregiver the care plan should be reviewed with and how it will be reviewed
- Plan for the person's return; ensure families are aware that this date is based on the duration of the outbreak (i.e., resident cannot return during outbreak)
- Determine if family/caregivers can accommodate the resident's required 14-day isolation period and whether the facility can provide PPE
- Arrange COVID-19 testing of resident prior to decanting
- Involve the pharmacy and the physician when making the decision to decant a resident
- Create communication plans in advance of a worst-case scenario that the facility can send out to families when needed. Create communications for family members of those residents staying in the home and those being moved as there may be confusion about whether it is still safe to stay in the facility.

## **Additional Links**

WDGPH (Congregate Settings): <https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/covid-19-information-workplaces-and-living-spaces/other-congregate-living-settings>

WDGPH (LTC/RH): <https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/covid-19-information-workplaces-and-living-spaces/long-term-care-and-retirement-homes>

PHO site (Congregate Settings) <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/congregate-living-settings-resources>

PHO Site (LTCH/RH) <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/long-term-care-resources>

Ministry of Health

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)

Assessment Centre locations: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-test-and-testing-location-information>

Regional Swab and PPE portal: <https://hmmscovid19.ca/>

PHOL (to check swab type): <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/covid-19-pcr-collection-kits>

COVID-19 Critical Supplies and Equipment Survey: <https://ontario-ppecse-survey.mgcs.gov.on.ca/Login>

### Contact Information for Partners:

**WDGPH:** Outbreak Line: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4752; Call Centre: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006; Congregate Setting Email: [congregatesetting@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:congregatesetting@wdgpublichealth.ca) (for IPAC-related questions/concerns)

**WDGPH After Hours:** 1-877-884-8653

**WDGPH Confidential Fax Line (for line listing):** 1-855-934-5463

**Guelph and Area Ontario Health Team:** Transformation Lead Emmi Perkins - [Emmi.Perkins@guelphfht.com](mailto:Emmi.Perkins@guelphfht.com)

**Rural Wellington Family Health Team:** Karen Armstrong - [KArmstrong@mountforestfht.com](mailto:KArmstrong@mountforestfht.com)