

SUBJECT: COVID-19 testing, clearance and isolation requirements for resident admissions to long-term care and retirement homes

Date: October 5, 2020

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To: Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes

From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes should refer to Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes, at www.health.gov.on.ca, for all requirements that must be met for new admissions and re-admissions.

COVID-19 testing and clearance, admissions can occur if:

- The resident has been tested for COVID-19, has a negative result and is transferred to the home within 24 hours of receiving the result, **OR**
- The resident has been confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19.
 - Residents being admitted who have been cleared of COVID-19 do not need to be re-tested or undergo 14-days of self-isolation.

As stated in Directive #3, a resident has been cleared of COVID-19 if they have had lab-confirmed COVID-19 more than 14 days prior to admission to the receiving home.

An admission/re-admission of a resident who is positive for COVID-19 may be made providing that it is approved by the local public health unit.

A negative result does not rule out the potential for incubating illness. Unless the resident has been confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19, the receiving home must have a plan to ensure the resident being admitted/re-admitted can complete 14-days of self-isolation, under Droplet and Contact Precautions **and is tested again at the end of self-isolation, with a negative result.** This second test can occur as early as day 10 of isolation. If the result is positive, the resident must complete another 14-days of self-isolation. A resident that is awaiting a test result must continue to stay in isolation until the test result is received and next steps can be determined.

For residents previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19:

- A resident that has been previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19 should not be re-tested for admission/re-admission to a Long-Term Care or Retirement Home **unless new onset of symptoms occurs.** If the individual is symptomatic, the decision to test should be based on clinical judgment and be at the discretion of public health.
- If further guidance is needed about if a resident has been cleared of COVID-19, or if testing is required prior to an admission/re-admission, facilities should call WDG Public Health Call Centre for consultation.

WDG Public Health Advisory

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Updated directives, guidance, testing and clearance documents can be found at www.health.gov.on.ca.

References:

1. Williams DC, Ontario. Ministry of Health; Ministry of Long-Term Care. COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long-Term Care homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act*, 2007. [Internet]. 2020 Sept 9 [cited 2020 Sept 24]. Available from: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf
2. Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance Update. [Internet]. 2020 Sept 24 [cited 2020 Sept 24]. Available from: http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_guidance.pdf

For more information:

Contact: WDG Public Health Call Centre at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006
After Hours at 1-877-884-8653
www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca