

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, and Midwives
Hospital Infection Control Departments and Emergency Departments

Updates to Directives 1, 3, 4, and 5 are included in this document.

1. [Directive #1 for Health Care Providers and Health Care Entities \(December 17, 2021\) / French version](#); [Directive #4 for Ambulance Services and Paramedics under the Ambulance Act \(December 17, 2021\) / French Version](#); [Directive #5 for Hospitals within the meaning of the Public Hospitals Act and Long Term Care Homes within the meaning of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 \(December 17, 2021\) / French Version](#)

Updates include:

- Updated PPE requirement to all documents as follows:
 - Additionally, as an interim precaution in light of the uncertainty around the mechanisms of transmission of the COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern (B.1.1.529), required precautions for all health care workers providing direct care to or interacting with a suspected, probable (i.e. placed in precautions as high risk contact, in an outbreak zone of the facility or recently transferred from a facility in outbreak) or confirmed cases of COVID-19 are a fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirator (or approved equivalent), eye protection (goggles or face shield), gown and gloves.
- Removal of sections regarding point of care risk assessments and how they apply during outbreaks as they are no longer relevant.
- These requirements come into effect on December 22, 2021.
- While separate from the requirements under Directive #5, Public Health Ontario has indicated that suspect COVID within the scope of their [Interim IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 \(December 15, 2021\)](#) is any patient that is placed into additional precautions based on symptoms of COVID-19 or a high risk exposure.

2. **Omicron COVID-19 Cases:**

- [COVID-19 Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#)
- Flowchart outlining steps after being exposed to a positive case (see attached).

3. **Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 (December 17, 2021) / French Version**

Updates include:

- Inclusion of minimum frequencies for IPAC self-audits by the homes
- Updated admissions and transfer requirements.
- Universal masking: general visitors to wear medical mask indoors and medical OR non-medical mask outdoors
- Emphasis on single room usage for isolation purposes
- Diagnostic testing can be using molecular POCT (ID NOW) OR lab based PCR
- Linkage to the COVID19 Fully Vaccinated Status in Ontario document for the definition of fully vaccinated

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local Timiskaming Health Unit:

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8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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