

# Memorandum

**To:** All employees and stakeholders  
**Date:** December 22, 2021  
**From:** LCDS Emergency Management Team  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Updated Guidance

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Hello everyone,

Ontario is seeing a significant increase in COVID-19 spread and the new Omicron variant becoming the dominant strain. As a result, in the afternoon on December 21, the MCCSS shared a memo regarding COVID-19 updates and interim direction.

The MCCSS interim direction will supersede the applicable areas in the current 'LCDS COVID-19 Guidance Document'. We have provided a copy of the December 21, 2021 interim direction for your review.

We expecting to see a dramatic spike in COVID-19 related illness after the Christmas break and will implementing agency protocols in addition to the MCCSS interim direction.

## **MCCSS Interim Guidance Highlights**

### **Screening Using Antigen Tests**

Beginning December 24, 2021 and until further notice, the agency is required to change their asymptomatic screening protocols for the use of rapid antigen testing for the mandatory screening of:

- **All staff/students/volunteers** (regardless of vaccination status) at a frequency of 2 times per week (7-day period). Based on test kit availability, the mandatory testing will apply to all employees and managers that provide direct care or may provide direct care (this includes employees in group living, independent living, host family and empowering employment).
- **All visitors** prior to entry to the location (regardless of vaccination status) unless the visitor presented a negative rapid antigen screening result at the same location the day before.
- The agency is also required to make rapid antigen screening available for **residents** (regardless of vaccination status) who return from an overnight absence. For clarity, it is not a mandatory requirement that returning residents undertake the test. However, residents are strongly encouraged to participate in rapid antigen screening as a measure to protect others in the home.

- **For overnight absences of 2 nights or less:** Rapid antigen screening should occur on day three and day seven from the day the resident left their home.
- **For overnight absences of 3 nights or more:** Rapid antigen screening should occur on the day of return (as part of active screening upon entry) and day four following their return.
- If the resident leaves for a subsequent overnight absence, a new testing period should be started when they return to their home.
  
- **Agency Antigen Testing Process**
  - Based on availability, the agency will deliver test kits to all employees required to complete the testing ASAP. **Mandatory testing will commence on Monday, December 27, 2021**
  - All employees will be required to complete testing every Monday and Thursday. Please write the date and your initials beside the test before uploading the test results to OTR:  
<https://lcads.auxiliumgroup.com/apps/lcads/>
  - Instructions on the administration of the antigen test can be found here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24h7xicNqA8> (please watch to the 1 minute 50 second mark of the video)
  - If an employee receives a positive test, please contact Lambton Public Health immediately to inform them you have received a positive test result from an antigen test and that you work for LCDS, a congregate living provider. Follow the advice of the Lambton Public Health and inform your location manager or the on-call manager if after regular business hours.
  
- **Use of N95 Respirators**
  - In alignment with Public Health Ontario's interim guidance for other high-risk congregate living sectors, parameters for the use of fitted N95 respirators has been expanded to include use while providing direct care to a person with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. Other appropriate PPE (based on individual risk assessment) includes a well-fitted medical mask or non-fit tested N95 respirator (or equivalent), eye protection, gown and gloves for direct care of persons with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. A fit tested N95 respirator (or equivalent or greater protection) should be used when an individual's medical needs require an aerosol-generating medical procedure and they are known or suspected to have COVID-19.
  - The LCDS COVID-19 Guidance document will be updated to reflect the change in the use of N95 respirators

### **Agency Enhanced Protocols**

- **A four (4) week pause** has been placed on the following services and operations commencing **Monday, December 27, 2021 and to resume on January 24, 2022** (pending any further updates or guidance) in hopes of reducing transmission.
  - Community Participation supports
  - On all in-person meetings
  - Administration Office and location managers to work remotely two (2) days per week.
  - Surgical/procedural masks must be worn in all agency congregate and non-congregate settings.
  - In-person training attendance to be reduced to five (5) attendees including trainers.
  - Contractor same day visits to multiple locations will be eliminated and only occur in the case of an emergency.

- **Ventilation and Air Flow**

There are air quality controls measures that can be taken to help reduce the spread of COVID –19. One additional action we can take related to improving ventilation. Ventilation includes:

- Dilution – opening windows and doors, increasing air exchange rates in air handling (HVAC) systems
- Filtration – using filters to remove viral particles from the air

We must ensure we follow the following practices when possible:

- use portable air cleaners
- take periodic breaks in which occupants leave the room to air out the space
- reduce occupancy
- keep windows and doors open as much as possible, even just slightly in colder weather
- ensure location thermostat fan settings are set to run rather than auto
- run exhaust fans at full capacity when able (for example in bathrooms and kitchens)
- use available outdoor space whenever possible (for example, for meetings, breaks, client interactions such as curbside pick-up)

We realize there is much to review. Thank you for all you continue to do to keep yourself, the people you support, your team, your loved ones and our community safe. Be well and safe.

EMT  
emt@lcads.on.ca