

PROVINCIAL LONG-TERM CARE HOME **COVID-19 Outbreak Standard Operating Procedures**

August 24, 2022

LONG-TERM CARE (LTC) HOMES

Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19 Outbreak Management

This guideline outlines **standard operating procedures** to support LTC Homes with preparedness planning, case identification, and implementation of their outbreak plan, to prevent and manage an outbreak, and aligns with the Minister's Directive: COVID-19 response measures for long-term care homes, as well as requirements related to emergency planning and infection prevention and control practices (IPAC) under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*.

This guide is not intended to replace formal ministry, public health or other relevant direction, guidance, or statutory requirements.

Being Prepared* –Assumptions for LTC Homes Prior to an Outbreak

- Ready-to-implement Outbreak Preparedness Plans (e.g., staffing contingency plan, including surge capacity, resources required)
- Ongoing screening and monitoring of residents, staff, and visitors including essential caregivers
- Robust training and auditing on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) best practices, including cohort contingency planning
- Adequate supplies and access to personal protective equipment (PPE), including staff training on use and stewardship of PPE
- Established communication systems with families and local partners
- Vigilant resident monitoring by the IPAC lead, medical director, physicians/nurse practitioners, and staff for early identification of COVID-19 signs/symptoms
- Established partnerships at the local level and system level (hospital, Ontario Health Region, public health, IPAC hub, staffing agencies, other community resources and the ministry)
- Readiness that if ONE resident is identified with COVID-19 RISK**, Outbreak Management Standard Operating Procedures are initiated

* See Appendix A for a list of requirements and resources for LTC homes.

** Residents, staff, and all entrants to a LTC home experiencing signs/symptoms or potential exposure to suspected/confirmed cases.

STEP #	AREA	TIMELINE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
0.	Outbreak Planning and Preparation	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outbreak Preparedness Plan, developed in collaboration with Public Health Unit (PHU), Community Living Settings (CLSs), IPAC hubs, ready to implement (includes staffing contingency plan, resident transfer scenarios with local partners, and daily case reporting) 	LTC Home
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring and screening of residents, staff, and visitors, including essential caregivers for COVID-19 risk • Proactively identifying a process for ordering test kits/requisitions/specimen collection for both COVID and other respiratory viruses • Ongoing training and auditing on IPAC protocols, including cohort contingency planning, and access to personal protective equipment (PPE) as per IPAC Program Standard and Minister's Directive • Ensure caregivers are re/trained in PPE including donning and doffing, selection of PPE, Hand Hygiene best practices, and performing Point of Care Assessments • Ensure clinical oversight is in place • Proactively assess if residents would qualify for COVID-19 therapeutics and if it aligns with their goals of care • Assess residents for transfer, do-not-resuscitate preferences • Maintain accurate records of staff, caregivers, visitors, and families • Follow current COVID-19 and other vaccination recommendations (e.g., influenza, pneumococcus), per Ministry of Health guidance, and ensure vaccine maintenance strategy is in place (ideally homes are onboarded for independent onsite administration and are able to order, store and administer vaccines) 	LTC Home

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify roles and responsibilities for local partners (OH Regions, IPAC Hubs, Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS)) • Convene and coordinate regional/local partnership tables • Regularly monitor key indicators as part of the risk identification and collaboration processes 	OH Regions
1.	Issue Identification and Early Management	Within first 24 hours of a suspected case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident/staff identified with COVID-19 signs/symptoms • Immediately implement enhanced IPAC measures, based on current IPAC Standard practices and procedures, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Droplet/Contact precautions initiated for residents with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and their roommate, if applicable ○ Implement staff and resident cohorting and isolation plan using designated spaces, as necessary; and provide direction on risk factor mitigation strategies, both inside and outside of the home ○ Mobilization of Environmental Services supports ○ Implement enhanced assessment and screening protocols for all residents, where necessary. • Testing initiated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suspected resident and/or staff; and ○ Other residents/staff with close contact, and anyone else designated high-risk, in accordance with local PHU direction on testing • Inform PHU, the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC), and IPAC Hub (inform IPAC hub on an as needed basis) • Immediate escalation to LTC Home corporate office with identified potential support needs, if applicable 	LTC Home

2.	Communication and Notification of Confirmed Case	Triggered with Confirmed Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on which party receives initial notification of positive results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If PHU, notify LTCHs; or ○ If LTCH, report to PHU and immediately notify MLTC via Critical Incident Reporting System or the After-hours action-line; and OH Region, as applicable 	PHU or LTC Home
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare a suspect or confirmed outbreak • Investigate and manage any persons under investigation, confirmed cases, and/or outbreaks in the home • Provide direction on outbreak control measures to be implemented • Provide support for case and contact/outbreak management • Lead management of the outbreak in collaboration with LTCH, local partners, and MLTC • Deploy PHU inspections if appropriate; may utilize powers under Section 22 or Section 13 of the <i>Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)</i> to address communicable disease prevention/control issues e.g., enforce IPAC protocols 	PHU
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement communication plan, including notification to residents; families, regarding outbreak protocol and visiting policies; staff, including daily emails on key updates; and acute care hospitals regarding possible transfers • Provide information/lists of staff, visitors, residents, including those cohorted/isolated to PHU for contact tracing and safety measures • Restrict visits, admissions/re-admissions, as per Ministry and/or PHU direction 	LTC Home
3.	Response Planning	Within 24 hours of declared outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate COVID-19 Outbreak Management Team (See Section 0) after outbreak is declared by PHU • Facilitate regional/community level supports to home based on available capacity at the local/regional level 	OH Regions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of regular touchpoint calls between home, MLTC, PHU, IPAC Hub, OH Regions, and hospital partners 	MRO to be identified locally

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLTC inspections deployed where necessary and based on risk assessment • Monitor daily statistics for outbreak management • Provide regulatory oversight of the emergency response to determine policy instruments that may need to be actioned (e.g., orders of the inspector or a Director's order requiring management) 	MLTC
4.	Outbreak Management	Within 24 hours of declared outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact tracing, follow up, and case reporting • Coordinate home outbreak testing strategy in accordance with latest guidance/directive 	PHU
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure ongoing cohorting of residents, students, volunteers, and staff, as per Ministry or PHU direction • Subsequent testing, as required based on PHU risk assessment 	LTC Home
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Outbreak Risk and IPAC assessments • IPAC hubs support provided, as needed 	MRO to be identified locally (PHU, IPAC Hubs and MLTC) OH Regions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of LTCH's ongoing outbreak management processes (work occurring beyond scope of this document) 	LTC Home in collaboration with MLTC, PHU, IPAC Hubs, Hospitals and OH Regions
5.	Oversight	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of recovery efforts 	MLTC LTC Corporate offices

Appendix A - LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19 Outbreak Management

Requirements and helpful resources for long term care homes include:

COVID-19 Response Measures:

- [COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario](#)
- [Minister's Directive: COVID-19 response measures for long-term care homes](#)

IPAC:

- [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#)
- [O. Reg. 246/22](#)
- [IPAC Standard](#)

Emergency Plans:

- [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#)
- [O. Reg. 246/22](#)
- [Long-Term Care Emergency Preparedness Manual](#)

Resident Bill of Rights:

- [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#)
- [O. Reg. 246/22](#)

Public Health Ontario:

- [Prevention and Management of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes](#)
- [Cohorting During an Outbreak of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Homes](#)
- [COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Checklist for Long-Term Care and Retirement Home](#)
- [COVID-19: Self-Assessment Audit Tool for Long-term Care Homes and Retirement Homes](#)