

Grey Bruce IPAC Hub Newsletter

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Grey Bruce IPAC Hub

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Summer feels like it is just starting but we know that the fall is right around the corner. As we prepare for the fall and winter months, we encourage all care homes to start planning now.

In previous years influenza has been our primary focus, now we have COVID-19 to contend with as well.

Things to consider as you prepare include:

- Policy and procedures
- Vaccination plans for staff and residents
 - Influenza
 - COVID-19
- Fall education for staff, residents and families
- Screening
- Swabbing
- Outbreak Response
 - Update COVID response plans
 - Antiviral planning and preparation (influenza and COVID-19)
 - Cohorting
 - Staffing contingency plans
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement
 - Review of Ministry documents
 - Check your kits

Special Edition Newsletter to come

Ministry Fall Preparedness, Vaccine update

Fall Preparedness

Policy and Procedure Review

Policies and procedures provide your staff, residents and families with best practice guidance and frameworks for daily operations within your organization. P&Ps are created on an as needed basis and should be reviewed annually or more frequently if best practice guidelines change.

It is important to involve the key players, for example IPAC leads, health and safety and leaderships. Using best practice and evidence based references is important to inform practice. The following references are commonly used in IPAC policies and procedures:

- Provincial/international bodies: CSA, PIDAC, PHAC, PHO, PicNet, IPAC Canada, Ministry guidance, etc.
- Colleagues
- Other organizations through networking
- IPAC Hub

Setting a schedule to review P&Ps can be very beneficial, the fall is when you want to review the following P&Ps

- Vaccination for residents, staff and visitors
- Education and training
- Outbreak response
- Screening
- Specimen collection
- PPE procurement
- Point of care risk assessment
- PPE donning and doffing
- Staff illness
- Fit Testing
- Surveillance
- Reporting

Education for Staff, Residents and Families

Regular and re-occurring education for staff, residents and families is an important component of your IPAC program within your home. Homes can develop their own in-education review, use reviews created by Public Health Ontario, or they can reach out to the Grey Bruce IPAC Hub for assistance. Education can be as simple as a one page info sheet to a more in-depth online or in-person education sessions.

Staff

- PPE donning and doffing
- Point of care risk assessments
- N95 fit testing and training
- Outbreak response – what is your role in an outbreak?
- Review of symptoms

Residents

- Reminder to report a new or worsening symptoms immediately to staff
- Review of hand hygiene
- Importance of mask use during outbreaks

Families / Visitors

- Staying home when they are ill
- Outbreak response – what can they expect during an outbreak? What role will they play in an outbreak?
- Review of PPE donning and doffing
- 4 Moments of Hand Hygiene

Outbreak Response

While the impacts of COVID-19 have continued to be on the forefront, we must ensure that staff and residents are also prepared for the upcoming influenza season. As you are well aware, outbreaks place a substantial burden on homes. Homes are encouraged to review and revise their outbreak readiness plans prior to the fall season. This plan will allow your home to act quickly and implement appropriate measures to limit the burden an outbreak can place on staff, residents and resident families.

Homes should consider the following when planning for the fall:

Update COVID-19 / Influenza Response Plans

Antiviral planning and preparation (influenza and COVID-19) – Antivirals are approved for use when dealing with both influenza and COVID-19. Home can be proactive by getting antiviral orders for treatment and prophylaxis of influenza. The use of COVID-19 antivirals should be discussed with the physician at the time of infection.

Cohorting – Cohorting can be use in the management of staff assignments, as well as resident placement during an outbreak. Whenever possible consider cohorting staff to specific units or floors. Reviewing all aspects of the home is key: do you have space to create a COVID ward? How and when would you consider the movement of residents to provide cohorting?

Staffing contingency plans – Staffing remains a concern across healthcare sectors. Homes must have a contingency plan to ensure shifts are covered during an outbreak. Considerations can include: agency staffing, use of staff from other outbreak homes, etc.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement – Review your current PPE inventory, including expiration dates, and assess the needs of the home. Consider the amount of PPE needed during an outbreak. Homes can continue to access PPE from the provincial portal.

Review of Ministry documents – Documents and directives are forever changing so keep close tabs on the key outbreak documents

Check your kits – Ensure you have test kits on hand (respiratory and enteric kits). Please connect with your infectious disease zone member to access kits.

Vaccination

To stop the spread of influenza and COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recommends immunization for health care workers, including non-clinical staff and volunteers, who have contact with residents. Influenza and COVID-19 can be very serious for older adults, as well as anyone in poor health.

Plan ahead to provide vaccines to your staff, residents and volunteers. More information on influenza vaccine to follow.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

Vaccine hesitancy has been named one of the top ten global threats by the World Health Organization. Vaccine hesitancy is the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccine. This stems, in large part, from misinformation about vaccines shared through social media platforms and the internet.

The Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at the Grey Bruce Health Unit is available for consult if you would like to discuss vaccine hesitancy within your home. They can be reached at 519-376-9420 ext. 2.

Many of the vaccine hesitancy tools you may have used for Influenza and COVID-19 immunization may also be helpful.

An IPAC lead must have the skills and knowledge of an IPAC program, IPAC core competencies, IPAC outbreak management, and awareness of Ministry directives and documents, along with the ability to translate their knowledge and engage staff, residents, volunteers and visitors within the home. IPAC training should be designed to meet the needs of the IPAC lead based on their current knowledge and skills.

- **Public Health Ontario's [Orientation for Infection Prevention and Control Leads in Long-Term Care](#)**
- **Review Best Practices for Infection Prevention and Control Programs in Ontario**
“The purpose of this document is to provide recommendations for specific activities for IPAC programs across the continuum of health care delivery in Ontario and for the adequate and appropriate resource allocation for IPAC programs across the continuum of health care delivery.”
Resource: www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/b/2012/bp-ipac-hc-settings.pdf?sc_lang=en
- **Infection Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Homes (Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices)**
This document brings together fundamental recommendations for infection prevention and control (IPAC) best practices that are relevant for long-term care homes (LTCHs) in Ontario providing routine care. These recommendations are developed by the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee for Infection Prevention and Control (PIDAC-IPC).

This document is meant to be a quick reference for those delegated with IPAC responsibilities and covers the following topics:

1. Legislation relating to IPAC practices in long-term care settings
2. IPAC program
3. Staff education and training
4. Routine Practices
5. Additional Precautions
6. Medications, vaccines and skin antisepsis
7. Control of the environment
8. Reprocessing medical equipment
9. Surveillance
10. Administrative controls
11. Outbreak management

Resource: www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/i/2021/ipac-ltch-principles-best-practices.pdf?sc_lang=en

- **IPAC Core Competencies - [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) – Online Learning | Public Health Ontario](#)**
- **COVID-19 IPAC Fundamentals Training - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/education-and-events/online-learning/ipac-fundamentals>**
- **Awareness of Best Practice Documents – included in this newsletter**

It is important to ensure that the homes IPAC lead is aware of current directives, guidance documents and ministry resources.

Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes

- [COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units](#)
- [Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility COVID-19 Guidance Document for Retirement Homes in Ontario](#)
- [Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario](#)
- [Minister's Directive: COVID-19 response measures for long-term care homes](#)
- [COVID-19 Test Requisition](#)
- [COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Checklist for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)

Retirement Homes

- [Retirement Home Policy to Implement Directive #3 July 16th 2021](#)
- [Retirement Home Act, 2010](#)
- [Retirement Home Regulatory Authority \(RHRA\)](#)
- The RHRA has recommended that RHs have a policy on asymptomatic screening
- [MOH COVID 19 Guidance: Long Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units](#)
- [COVID 19 Guidance Document for LTCH in ON](#)
- [Screening Tool for LTCH / Retirement Home](#)

Congregate Settings

- [COVID-19 Guidance for MCCSS-funded and Licensed Congregate Living Settings | \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
- [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing | Ontario.ca](#)
- [Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility | Ontario.ca](#)
- [Local Health Integration Network Home and Community Care Services - Health Services in Your Community - MOHLTC \(gov.on.ca\)](#)

Please refer to PHO's webpage for upcoming webinars: [Events | Public Health Ontario](#)

Public Health Ontario - Best Practice Documents

General IPAC Best Practice Documents

- Hand hygiene: [bp-hand-hygiene.pdf \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Environmental cleaning: [PIDAC: Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections | January 2018 \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Routine and additional precautions: [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions | Public Health Ontario](#)
- Infection Prevention and Control Programs: [bp-ipac-hc-settings.pdf \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Screening, Testing and Surveillance for Antibiotic-Resistant Organisms (AROs): [aros-screening-testing-surveillance.pdf \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of medical equipment/devices: [bp-cleaning-disinfection-sterilization-hcs.pdf \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Infection Prevention and Control for Long Term Care Homes Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices: [Infection Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Homes \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)

COVID-19 Best Practice Documents

- Prevention, Surveillance and Infection Control Management of Novel Respiratory Infections in All Health Care Settings: [Best Practices for Prevention, Surveillance and Infection Control Management of Novel Respiratory Infections in All Health Care Settings \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Interim Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern for Health Care Settings: [Interim Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern for Health Care Settings \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Best Practices for Prevention of Transmission of Acute Respiratory Infection: [bp-prevention-transmission-ari.pdf \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- Interim Guidance on Infection Prevention and Control for Health Care Providers and Patients Vaccinated Against COVID-19 in Hospitals and Long-Term Care Settings https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2021/06/covid-19-vaccinated-patients-hcw-hospitals.pdf?sc_lang=en
- De-escalation of COVID-19 Outbreak Control Measures in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ltcrh/2020/06/covid-19-outbreak-de-escalation-ltch.pdf?sc_lang=en