

# **Additional COVID-19 Information for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes**

## **Update to York Region Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes as of April 10, 2020**

As a follow-up to our message sent April 9, 2020, this message provides our Long-Term Care and Retirement Home (LTCH/RH) partners with additional information on:

- Lists of LTCH/RH currently in COVID-19 or other respiratory outbreaks
- Regulation 77/20 for LTCH/RH
- Letter for Director of Care when LTCH/RH is in COVID-19 outbreak
- Updated Clearance Guidance for Health Care Workers Returning to Work
- Personal Protective Equipment update

### **List of LTCH/RH in Outbreak to be posted at [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19)**

To ensure our LTCH/RH partners as well as the three hospitals in York Region are aware, York Region Public Health will be updating daily the list of which LTCH/RH are currently in COVID-19 outbreaks, and which are in respiratory outbreaks, on our website at [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19). This information can be found under the tab “Outbreaks in Long-Term Care and Community Care Settings”

Having this information readily available for our community partners will ensure they are aware of which facilities are under outbreak protocols for COVID-19 or other respiratory (e.g., influenza) outbreak.

### **New Regulation 77/20 available to LTCH**

LTCH/RH staff are recommended to provide their COVID-19-related health information (e.g., symptoms, testing and results, etc.) to their employers.

On March 23, 2020 Regulation 77/20 under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* was issued. LTCH are encouraged to be familiar with the contents of the Regulation, available here: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r20077>. This newly created Regulation allows LTCH to: “Require the provision of and collect information from staff or contractors about their likely or actual exposure to COVID-19, or about any other health conditions that may affect their ability to provide services.”

### **Letter for Director of Care when LTCH/RH in COVID-19 Outbreak**

York Region Public Health has prepared a letter (attached) that will be provided to all Directors of Care to distribute to their staff when the facility is in a declared COVID-19 outbreak. The purpose of the letter is to ensure all staff/health care workers are aware of their responsibilities regarding:

- Testing requirements
- Directions to staff with symptoms (unwell staff)
- Directions to all tested staff
- Working in other facilities

This letter is being provided in advance to all facilities in York Region to ensure they are aware of the requirements in the event their facility has a COVID-19 outbreak.



## Updated Clearance Guidance for Health Care Workers Returning to Work

On April 10, 2020, Ontario’s Ministry of Health issued new guidance on testing and clearance, with updated guidance for clearing health care workers (HCW) returning to work. For **HCW** returning to work:

**Test-based approach:** HCWs who have tested positive for COVID-19 should remain off work until they receive 2 consecutive negative specimens (single NP swab) at least 24 hours apart

**Non test-based approach:** HCWs may return to work 14 days after symptom onset (or as directed by their employer/Occupational Health and Safety)

For HCW that are agreed to be critical to operations by all parties, earlier return to work may be permitted under “work self-isolation.” This means maintaining isolation outside of work until 14 days after symptom onset (or until 2 negative swabs) but continuing to work while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) at work, and not working in multiple locations.

The following provincial guidance table provides various scenarios for managing return to work for HCWs critical to operations under work self-isolation

Symptoms	Test Result	Recommendations for HCW Return to Work under Work-Self-Isolation
Yes	Positive	May return to work as soon as 24 hours after symptom resolution <b>AND</b> Continue with appropriate PPE at work until 2 consecutive negative tests or until 14 days after symptom onset and asymptomatic
Yes	Negative	May return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution. If the HCW was self-isolating due to an exposure at the time of testing, return to work should be under work-self-isolation until 14 days from last exposure.
Yes	Not tested* (i.e., test not available)	May return to work at 14 days after symptom onset <b>OR</b> May return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution with appropriate PPE and under work-self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset
Never symptomatic at time of test	Positive	May return to work at 14 days after positive specimen collection date <b>OR</b> May return to work if remain asymptomatic 72 hours from test and continue with appropriate PPE at work until 2 consecutive negative tests or until 14 days after symptom onset and asymptomatic <b>Note:</b> Although testing on asymptomatic individuals is not recommended, in the event testing occurs this row can be used to guide decision making around the HCW returning to work

\*NOTE: All symptomatic HCW should be tested

## Personal Protective Equipment Update

On April 9, 2020, the Ministry of Health indicated that LTCH/RH facing challenges with accessing and maintaining supply of PPE can reach out to the Ontario Health table for their region. For York Region, we are part of the Central Region. Requests for support for PPE can be directed to:

Donna Cripps, Transitional Regional Lead, [donna.cripps@lhins.on.ca](mailto:donna.cripps@lhins.on.ca)

Alternatively, LTCH/RH can reach out to the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre Logistics section at [EOClogistics.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:EOClogistics.moh@ontario.ca) for emergency supplies.

## For more information

Call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280** (8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, after hours call 905-953-6478). Continue to visit [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals), [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19) and [Ontario.ca/covid19](http://Ontario.ca/covid19) for up to date information on COVID-19.



[DATE]

Dear staff of [NAME OF FACILITY]

Thank you for the service you provide to those most vulnerable in our communities. To help ensure these most vulnerable individuals are protected, please read carefully and follow all directions in this letter.

As of [INSERT DATE OUTBREAK WAS DECLARED], a COVID-19 outbreak has been declared in the facility named above in which you work.

### **Testing Requirements**

All staff/health care workers that have or had (in the past 14 days) any one symptom of an illness that may be COVID-19 (this could include but is not limited to fever, chills, unexplained fatigue, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing) are required to undergo testing for COVID-19.

Some staff that are considered 'exposed' to a COVID-19 case, even if they don't have or never had symptoms, will also be required to be tested, according to recommendations and advice given to the Director of Care by York Region Public Health.

### **Directions to staff with symptoms (unwell staff):**

If you are a staff person that has any symptoms of COVID-19 (or had any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past two weeks, even if they have since resolved) you must:

1. Get tested for COVID-19
2. Self-isolate and not attend work in any facility, including this facility, while you are waiting for your test results to come back. Please see [here](#) for more information on self-isolation and what that means.
3. Tell your household members to also remain home on isolation while waiting for your test results to come back (i.e., not go out into the community, including to work for any reason other than urgent medical appointments).
4. Tell anyone (patients or other staff or friends) you would have come into close contact with in any other health care facility in the 48 hours before your symptoms started until when you began self-isolating to also stay home while your test results are pending. Please visit [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19) and see the section on

“Contact tracing and how it helps Public Health” for general information on how to identify and notify your close contacts.

**Directions to all tested staff:**

Whether you have or had symptoms or not, if you have been tested you must inform any and all other workplaces you attend about the fact that you come from a COVID-19 outbreak facility and are being tested for COVID-19 too.

If your results are positive, York Region Public Health will be in contact with you quickly to inform you on next steps.

**Please note that all staff - whether you are tested, symptomatic, on the line list or not - should not at all be working in any other facility, given this facility is in COVID-19 outbreak. This advice applies to all staff, including physicians. This is consistent with Ontario Health’s guidance that no staff in COVID-19 affected outbreak facilities should be working anywhere else.**

For any questions or concerns, please visit [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19), or speak to your Director of Care.

Thank you.

COVID-19 Outbreak Management Team  
York Region Public Health