

COVID-19: Update #15

Update: Testing Guidance & Clearance Documents Indeterminate Test Results

Universal Swabbing in Long-Term Care & Emergency Child Care

Update: Transfer of Hospital Patients and Community Clients to Long-Term Care Homes

Update: Primary Care Guidance Document

Simcoe Muskoka Congregate Setting COVID-19 Response Plan

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices

Date: May 6, 2020

The most current case counts for laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Simcoe Muskoka District Health (SMDHU) region are available at [Simcoe Muskoka Health Stats](http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/infectious-diseases/a-h/covid-19)
<http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/infectious-diseases/a-h/covid-19>.

Update: Testing Guidance & Clearance Documents

The [provincial testing guidance document](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_covid_testing_guidance.pdf):

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_covid_testing_guidance.pdf has been updated to include:

- Additional guidance for testing newborns
- Conjunctivitis added to atypical symptom list
- Added consideration for other underlying reasons for patients presenting with ONLY runny nose, sneezing or congestion (such as seasonal allergies and post-nasal drip)
- Added testing considerations for cancer and hemodialysis patients

Please note that testing should be offered and performed for anyone presenting with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to the assessment centres, unless there is a shortage of swabs or other testing logistical issues. The testing is important to understand the epidemiology in the general population to inform ongoing and future public health measures. It will be up to each assessment centre to decide who they are able to test based on their testing capabilities.

In addition, [Quick Reference Guidance on Testing and Clearance](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_clearing_cases_guidance.pdf) document has been updated. Available at:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_clearing_cases_guidance.pdf.



Please note: the SMDHU resource has been removed and only this provincial testing and clearance document is being referenced.

Indeterminate Test Results

For the purposes of public health management and as a precaution as per provincial direction, indeterminate or inconclusive COVID-19 laboratory results are considered positive.

Testing for COVID-19 is done by real-time PCR using protocols validated by the Public Health Ontario (PHO) Laboratory and the National Microbiology Laboratory. Commercial assays are also in use at PHO Laboratory, and targets vary across the assays.

Laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 at Public Health Ontario Laboratory consists of:

- Detection of at least one genome target by real-time PCR;
- OR
- One or multiple targets is/are indeterminate by real-time PCR AND detection of COVID-19 virus by sequencing.

Additional information is available on the [PHO Laboratory website](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/test-information-index/wuhan-novel-coronavirus) at:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/test-information-index/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>.

Universal Swabbing in Long-Term Care & Emergency Child Care

To support a consistent focus on testing across the province, the Ministry of Health established a target for public health units to coordinate the completion of testing in all long-term care homes and emergency child care centres by May 15, 2020. As such, SMDHU is working closely with Ontario Health, acute care, assessment centres, community paramedicine, long-term care and child care staff to meet these deadlines.

Update: Transfer of Hospital Patients and Community Clients to Long-Term Care Homes

As of April 29, 2020, hospitals may discharge patients to a long-term care home where:

- It is a readmission to a long-term care home (the resident is returning to their home)
- The receiving home is **NOT** in a COVID-19 outbreak
- The resident has been tested for COVID-19 at point of discharge, **has a negative result** and is transferred to the home within 24 hours of receiving the result
- The receiving home has a plan to ensure that the resident being readmitted can complete 14-days of quarantine

Initial admissions to long-term care homes from hospital continue to be temporarily paused. There are no restrictions on residents returning to the home from outpatient visits, but consultations between the home and hospital are encouraged to determine if a more appropriate plan may be arranged to keep residents with frequent hospital visits in hospital.

Admissions to long-term care homes from the community should continue under the following circumstances:

- The receiving home is NOT in a COVID-19 outbreak
- The resident has been tested for COVID-19, has a negative result and is transferred to the home within 24 hours of receiving the result
- The receiving home has a plan to ensure that the resident being admitted can complete 14-days of quarantine

In the event of an outbreak, all long-term care homes are asked to consider the ability to isolate, in their determination of rate of admission to the home.

Updated: Primary Care Guidance Document

The [Primary Care Guidance document](#) available at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_primary_care_guidance.pdf has been updated to include:

- Additional guidance for virtual and in-person care
- [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#)
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf (expanded list of symptoms)
- [COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance Document](#)
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_patient_screening_guidance.pdf

Simcoe Muskoka Congregate Setting COVID-19 Response Plan

Acute Care, Ontario Health (North Simcoe Muskoka), and SMDHU together with community paramedicine, have established a coordinated approach to support regional congregate settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. These settings include long-term care homes, retirement homes, group homes, homes for special care and domiciliary care, and hospice. Supports for shelters are currently being provided by local assessment centres, community paramedicine programs and virtual social work through Ontario Health, North Simcoe Home and Community Care.

Facilities are being assessed to identify gaps and to determine a risk level with high-risk facilities being prioritized for support first. Supports include infection prevention and control education, specialized geriatric support, onsite assistance with specimen collection, communications and media support and staffing.

There are a number of other resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at www.smdhu.org/hpportal as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#): <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/> and the [Government of Ontario](#): http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx.

For further healthcare worker information regarding COVID-19 or to report a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19, please contact the Infectious Diseases Team at (705) 721-7520 extension 8809 during business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and Saturday to Sunday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851.