

Memo To: All Employees

From: Management Team

Date: December 13, 2023

Re: COVID-19 Update and Reminders

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Hello everyone:

The holiday season is upon us. We are very much thinking about what it will bring in terms of both COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

York Region Public Health and Ministry of Children Community and Social Services are working on updated guidance. We will share more information as soon as it is available. Case counts and outbreaks reported through the COVID-19 in York Region interactive dashboard are an underestimate of the true number of individuals with COVID-19 and outbreaks in York Region. Public Health Units across Ontario are prioritizing case management of high-risk individuals and settings.

Wastewater viral load indicators remain high showing that COVID-19 is presently within our community.

The circulating variants are not known to cause any more serious illness, but they are highly transmissible and with the vulnerability of many of the people in our congregate settings, it's important to stay on top of things.

To be proactive, Community Living York South has decided to **reestablish mandatory masking for all employees and visitors at all group homes and locations effective Wednesday, December 13, 2023**. Supported people are encouraged to wear masks whenever possible. Those who are supported in SIL will be required to wear a mask while receiving support. **This mandatory masking mandate will be reassessed on or before January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.**

At the most recent IPAC community of practice, we have had some refreshers on the basics of prevention including the **critical importance of hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas and masking** based on public health and/or organizational guidance during outbreaks or other high-risk situations.

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 are required to wear N95 masks for 10 days from symptom onset or positive test (whichever is latest), upon return to work.

Other considerations:

1. We encourage everyone to think about your risk of exposure and transmission. If you've been to a large indoor event, you may want to test proactively.
2. Where you can, encourage good air circulation indoors, including using HEPA filters and keeping windows open, where you can, while you can (before the cold weather hits).
3. Continuously self-monitor yourself and our people supported for symptoms. We are hearing many people thinking they have allergies or a mild cold and then testing positive for COVID-19.
4. Ask any and all questions if you are unsure what to do or have any concerns. We have a wonderful community of practice in our sector and access to expertise from York Region Public Health to answer our questions.

Thank you all and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Happy Holidays, everyone.

All the very best in the New Year.

Cathy, Katie, Kathy, Tracy, Silvia, Jennifer, Jan, Carmen, Ritu, Obaid, Sabina, Elizabeth, Nancy

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