

novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information For Home Care Staff

Important Information re: COVID-19

To protect yourself and others from COVID-19, wear appropriate [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).

[Continuous masking](#) is the required practice for all client care and client encounters.

[Routine practices](#) and [point of care risk assessment \(PCRA\)](#) are always required for every client encounter. Stay up to date on which [PPE](#) is required for routine care, for clients on [contact and droplet precautions](#) and for clients requiring an [aerosol generating medical procedure](#) (AGMP).

Do not work if you are unwell. You shall assess your own [Fitness to Work](#) each day.

An online assessment tool for [Healthcare Workers](#) is available on the Alberta Health Services website.

- Any staff member that is suspected, probable or confirmed for COVID-19 shall not visit clients in their homes or other congregate living settings as per the [CMOH Order](#) (Chief Medical Officer of Health Order). If you are experiencing symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or other respiratory symptoms DO NOT attend to work and notify your employer immediately.
- Healthcare workers who were required to self-isolate or experienced symptoms but had a negative swab for COVID-19 shall be assessed by their organization's WHS or AHS Public Health before [returning to work](#).

Client Assessment and Care

When able to call ahead prior to providing care, have the client complete the self-assessment online or ask them the questions over the phone. When you arrive at a client's home or clinic, always do [a point of care risk assessment](#), and ask the self-assessment questions again. All household members must complete the self-assessment prior to providing client care and if any individuals are experiencing symptoms initiate [contact and droplet precautions](#).

Updated [testing and self-isolation criteria](#) shall be followed.

Wrap and double bag any general waste including used PPE. Refer to the [Provincial Guide: Community Based Services Waste Disposal](#) for more information.

Follow [IPC healthcare attire recommendations](#) for wearing or laundering of uniforms or work attire. If attire is soiled during care, remove and replace attire, and place soiled items in plastic bag to launder at home.

Backup Plan

Home care may need to adjust services in response to this situation. Your leadership team will advise you of details when this needs to be implemented.

You are encouraged to check-in with your clients by telephone to see how they are managing after adjustments to their services have been made (i.e. monitoring and surveillance). If a client is at risk of hospitalization, talk with them about what informal supports (e.g., informal caregivers or community resources) may be available to assist them in remaining safe and in their home. Adjust services as necessary in order to avoid any emergency department visits or acute care admissions.

All clients should have a backup plan in place should they decide to cancel home care services or home care can only provide essential services. If a client has cancelled services, ensure you follow up with the client on a regular basis.

A backup plan should consider the following:

- Who can help care for client if they are sick or their home care provider is sick?
- Can they provide care for a period lasting from one week to a number of months?
- Can care be provided safely in the home?
- Can frequency of care visits be reduced?

Staffing

Staff who are following handwashing guidelines, using appropriate PPE and applying it correctly while caring for clients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, are not considered contacts and may safely enter public spaces within the facility or other rooms.

Any individual (client, staff or designated essential visitor) who has had direct contact with a person who is confirmed for COVID-19, without wearing recommended PPE (i.e., before they are aware that the person is confirmed COVID-19), is required to self-isolate as per the CMOH direction.

Assign staff (cohort), to the greatest extent possible, to either:

- Exclusively provide care/service for clients that are asymptomatic (no illness or symptoms of illness), or

- Exclusively provide care/service for clients who are symptomatic (have suspected or confirmed COVID-19).

When cohorting of staff is not possible:

- Minimize movement of staff between clients who are asymptomatic and those who are symptomatic, and
- Have staff complete work with asymptomatic clients first before moving to those clients who are symptomatic.

Visit <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx> for the most up-to-date COVID-19 information.