PPE Distribution to Primary Care Network Clinics

This is an update to the PPE distribution memo that went out to Primary Care Network partners on March 11, 2020.

AHS is allocating personal protective equipment (PPE) and small amounts of cleaning supplies to Primary Care Network (PCN) clinics. Distribution is being coordinated by PCNs.

As critical partners in the management of COVID-19, the role of primary care clinics in Alberta’s response is well-recognized and understood.

Please note this memo is only for PCN member clinics. Non-PCN primary care providers can get information in this PPE distribution document.

Key Points:

- There are standardized provincial processes to ensure equity and appropriateness of PPE distribution. Although AHS is confident in its PPE supply, there is a limited amount and we must ensure highest risk areas are supplied
- Distribution of appropriate PPE and small amounts of cleaning supplies to community clinics and PCNs will be coordinated by AHS provincially and operationalized at the zone level to ensure appropriateness
- A hub and spoke distribution model has been developed where PCNs hubs coordinate PPE distribution to their member clinics
- Every effort should be made to conserve supplies and clinicians must only order what they require for a week at a time based on current PPE guidance
- PPE must be closely monitored and not be left out in public spaces
- We appreciate your judicious use of supplies to ensure availability across the system for the duration of the pandemic
- When possible, encourage COVID-19 symptomatic patients to complete the online self-assessment at ahs.ca/covid or call 811 to be referred for testing, if appropriate
- Clinics should contact their PCN for guidance on how primary care should manage and test patients with COVID-19 symptoms in their zone
- Tele-advice lines are available for primary care providers in Alberta. Providers can phone for specialist advice on caring for presumed and confirmed COVID-19 patients who are recovering at home
1. PPE supplies
- Available PPE supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic include:
  - **PPE for provider when caring for patient with influenza like illness (ILI) symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19:** Provider wears procedure mask, face shield, gown and gloves (contact/droplet precautions)
  - **PPE for provider caring for asymptomatic patient:** Provider wears procedure mask (continuous masking)
  - **PPE for patient with ILI symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19:** Patient wears procedure mask
  - **PPE for patient without ILI symptoms:** Patient does not wear any PPE
- N95 respirators may be requested when an [Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure](#) is required and proof of current fit test
- Clinics may request small amounts of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes
- Physicians should increase the use of virtual care options and limit physical examinations to only the most necessary cases, in the interest of public health and the safety of patients, themselves and other healthcare workers

2. Criteria to receive PPE
To receive PPE, primary care physicians must answer yes to these questions based on [CPSA position statement](#) on public health recommendations:
- Your clinic is engaging in essential/urgent patient procedures and visits
- Your clinic is open during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Your clinic is following recommended CPSA [physical distancing practices](#)
- Your clinic is following recommended CPSA [virtual care practices](#)
- Your clinic is following [continuous masking guidelines](#)

3. PPE distribution process
- Member clinics can request supplies through your PCN point of contact who will place an order with AHS supply management
- Distribution of PPE to clinics will be based on need, through your PCN Executive Director
- AHS supply management will distribute PPE to PCN hubs
- PCN hubs will distribute PPE to member clinics
- PCN hubs may request small amounts of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes by adding to the “other” section of the order form
  - Disinfectant wipes: 160/ container
  - Hand sanitizer: 400ml bottle
  - Refer to [FAQs for primary care](#) for cleaning options if disinfectant wipes or hand sanitizer are not available
• You may not receive all the supplies you request due to limited supplies and alternate options should be considered. Thank you for your understanding as we continue to allocate supplies based on availability

4. PPE guidance
• Only patients with ILI symptoms should wear procedure masks in clinics
• Staff should wear procedure masks at all times and in all areas of their workplace if they are involved in direct patient contact or cannot maintain adequate social distancing from patients and coworkers
• Procedure masks should be immediately changed and disposed of when soiled, wet or contaminated and after care for any patient with suspected or confirmed influenza like illness or COVID-19
• Follow infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols including hand hygiene and the use of additional PPE when delivering patient care
• Follow donning and doffing guidance
• Face shields, gowns and gloves should not be worn continuously

5. How much PPE do I request?
Review the standard scenario below to calculate how much PPE to request:

• Despite changing your practice to virtual care wherever possible, if you see about 20 patients face to face per day, you should wear a procedure mask continuously and change it as per the PPE guidance
• If about 5 of your patients/day typically have ILI symptoms, the patient requires a procedure mask and you need a new procedure mask
• Given the PPE guidance, this means that you would need about 13 procedure masks, 5 gowns, 5 face shields and 5 sets of gloves per day
• If you work in a community setting 5 days/week, you would need about 65 procedure masks, 25 face shields, 25 gowns and 25 sets of gloves
• To calculate the amount of PPE you should request, you would further multiply this by the number of clinic staff who would also be required to attend to the patient(s) and meet the PPE guidance

Note: You should attempt to limit the number of clinic staff directly interacting with patients with ILI symptoms to those who are required for safe clinical care

For more information:
To request PPE for your clinic: Your PCN Executive Director/other point of contact designated by your PCN
Primary care information on COVID-19: www.ahs.ca/covidphc
PPE information and resources: www.ahs.ca/covidPPE
Questions about distribution process: phc@ahs.ca