

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Assistant Deputy Minister
Long-Term Care Operations

11th Floor, 1075 Bay Street
Toronto ON M5S 2B1
Tel.: (416) 327-7461
Fax: (416) 327-7603

Ministère des Soins de longue durée

Sous-ministre adjointe
Opérations relatives aux soins de longue durée

1075, rue Bay, 11e étage
Toronto ON M5S 2B1
Téléphone: (416) 327-7461
Télécopieur: (416) 327-7603



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October 29, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Homes

FROM: Sheila Bristo
Assistant Deputy Minister
Long-Term Care Operations Division
Ministry of Long-Term Care

SUBJECT: Fit Testing Supports for Long-term Care Homes to Respirator Masks

This memo is further to the recent announcement from the Deputy Minister of Long-Term Care Richard Steele and Ontario Health President and CEO Matthew Anderson regarding the Ontario government's commitment to provide long-term care homes with an up to eight week supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). This commitment is part of the government's Long-Term Care Preparedness Plan.

N95 respirators (N95s) are an important piece of PPE to protect workers from aerosolized particles of COVID-19. Recent changes to [Directive 5](#) have led to increased access to N95s for regulated and unregulated health care workers in sectors, including for long-term care homes. Training and fit testing is required for any employee that is required to wear an N95 to conduct their job, as outlined in [Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA). An N95 fit test checks whether the respirator properly fits the face of someone who wears it. Properly fitted N95s are needed to ensure the proper level of protection is provided against COVID-19. Employees also must be trained in the care and use of the respirator they are fitted to.

While long-term care homes are responsible for fit testing and appropriate N95 use training for their employees, provincial support is now available to help those homes that are not able to secure fit testing services through other means. Long-term care homes may be able to access this additional support through the Ontario Health [Critical PPE Escalation Portal](#) (see Appendix A for instructions). Deployment of this service, provided by Levitt Safety, will be prioritized based on greatest need (e.g., homes in outbreak) and long-term care homes

will be responsible for the costs associated with fit testing. The cost will be determined by Levitt Safety once the needs of the long-term care home are reviewed. After an initial consultation with Levitt Safety, homes also may request supply from the Ontario government to conduct fit testing. After the fit testing service is provided, additional orders may be placed by the home.

To further support long-term care homes in meeting increased demand for N95 respirators, this fit testing support service, along with the following continuum of actions should be taken (please refer to Appendix B):

1. Continue to practice conservation and appropriate use;
2. Train an in-house fit tester to support ongoing fit test needs; and
3. Engage an external fit test service.

Thank you for your continued efforts to prevent and contain COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Sheila Bristo
Assistant Deputy Minister
Long-Term Care Operations Division

c:

Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Melanie Fraser, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Karen Hughes, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
Heidi Francis, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
Dr. Thomas Stewart, Co-Chair, Recovery and Planning Table
Donna Duncan, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Lisa Levin, AdvantAge Ontario
Brent Gingerich, Chair, Board of Directors, Ontario Long-Term Care Association
Jane Sinclair, Chair, Board of Directors, Advantage Ontario
Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Policy Division
Jacqueline Cureton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
Catherine Brown, Interim Executive Lead, Ontario Health
Olha Dobush, Executive Lead, LTC Stabilization
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachments:

- Appendix A: Instructions on Requesting Provincial Fit Testing Support
- Appendix B: Continuum of Actions