

Frequently Asked Questions – IPAC Hubs

1) Why are hubs being created and what will they do?

Establishment of the local centres of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) expertise (hubs), is part of the government commitment and multi-initiative strategy to support long-term care homes in building IPAC capacity.

There are currently 25 hubs being established across the province and operational implementation of this initiative is being led by Ontario Health and Ontario Health Regions. Depending on the existing IPAC expertise locally and agreement from local partners, hubs will be situated in hospitals, Public Health Units or another local health system partner organization.

The role of the hub includes:

- Supporting a network of IPAC service providers and experts and working with this group to match local resources and expertise to the IPAC needs of long-term care homes;
- Facilitating knowledge transfer and expertise development among hub members;
- Strengthening current partnerships and helping to broker new ones;
- Sharing advanced IPAC and clinical knowledge;
- Supporting the development of evidence-based IPAC programming in homes;
- Sharing expertise and capacity for planning and response, and
- Facilitating operational IPAC supports for homes, as needed.

2) Is my home required to engage with a local hub?

Yes, long-term care homes should engage with their local IPAC hub. In many instances, hubs will incorporate existing networks and/or tables that have already been established and that your home may already be participating in.

As well, participating in a hub will provide home personnel with networking, problem-solving and capacity development opportunities in the area of IPAC.

Homes are asked to identify an IPAC lead to represent their home in their local hub. In addition, engagement of the home's Medical Director(s) in the hub is recommended.

3) What is the expected role of my home be in the hub?

The role of the long-term care homes includes:

- IPAC delivery/programming in the home, which is compliant with current statutory and other requirements for the sector;
- IPAC leadership in the home;
- IPAC-related staffing plans and surge capacity to support disease outbreaks;
- Working collaboratively with the hub and drawing on expertise provided,
- Disseminating knowledge, expertise and assistance from the hub to the home and to peers and colleagues as/when appropriate;
- Providing access to education programs to enhance knowledge and skills of staff members such as Public Health Ontario's IPAC training;
- Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place that enable and support strong IPAC practices during an outbreak such as mechanisms to increase environmental cleaning, cohorting plans, communications protocols and processes to obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

4) When will my local hub be up and running?

The Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care are working with Ontario Health and Ontario Health Regions to establish the hubs as quickly as possible. Implementation is being prioritized in areas of the province that are experiencing the most COVID-19 cases. Several hubs are already established with the remainder expected to be operational in November.

Long-term care homes will be contacted by their local hub in the coming weeks. It is expected that hubs will initially contact homes' executive leadership and outreach to hub members will proceed from there.

It is expected that hubs will communicate key information to homes, including the hub's location and contact information of key personnel.

5) Will my local hub provide me with IPAC personnel, if I need help?

Providing direct support and personnel in homes is not the core role of the hubs. Some hubs will be able to provide on the ground IPAC expertise in an emergency (such as outbreak) – often in collaboration with Ontario Health, hospital and Public Health partners. This assistance could include deploying the IPAC personnel as an immediate support to homes in outbreak or highest need/risk.

As hubs are being developed across the province, the on-the-ground staffing support capacity of each of the hub will be confirmed. The hubs key mandate is to provide advanced IPAC expertise, collaborative assistance and on-demand advice, guidance and direct support on IPAC practices for LTC homes. Hubs will also act as a networking site, a community of practice, and a source of shared resources in collaboration with Public Health Ontario and other partners. Long-term care homes are

responsible for IPAC related programming and staffing as per the requirements of applicable legislation and regulations and direction from the Ministries.

6) Is there a cost to my home to participate in my local hub?

No, there is no cost to your home associated with accessing the services of a local IPAC hub.

7) Can more than one person from my home participate in the local hub?

Yes. More than one person can access the services of the hub. There will be opportunities to connect with your hub and discuss access for your home in the coming weeks.

8) Are hubs established for exclusive use and access by long-term care homes?

Hubs are created as a local community resource for access and use by congregate living settings, such as long-term care homes, retirement homes, group homes, other.

Hubs will prioritize their work based on a risk-based approach.