

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Health PEI Staff

FROM: Cheryl Banks, HPEI Director of COVID Operations

DATE: May 11, 2023

SUBJECT: COVID UPDATE Overview of status, Family Presence Policy Update, Paxlovid core prescriber update

Good evening,

Approximately three years after the COVID-19 pandemic began in Spring 2020, we have been slowly transitioning away from COVID-19 specific processes back into normal operational practices while maintaining a heightened state of awareness.

This by no means that COVID is over, but rather that we have learned how to effectively manage and deal with it. Below is a short overview of the current status of where we are in the pandemic response.

Family Presence Policy reinstated on May 11, 2023

- The important role families and visitors play in the lives of our patients has not been forgotten. Now that it is safe to do so we are moving back towards Family Presence.
- There is no longer a restriction on the number of people at the bedside at any one time however, as in the past those caring for patients can limit visitors depending upon individual patient wishes and care needs. [PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MEMO.](#)

Masking and all admission testing lifted on April 21, 2023

- Apart from a respiratory outbreak, masking for all HPEI facilities has been lifted. The emphasis is now on point-of-care risk assessment and enhanced Infection Control Practices such as diligent hand washing.
- All admission respiratory testing was also moved to symptomatic testing only.

During a Respiratory outbreak enhanced IPAC measures will be added.

- Universal masking will be reimplemented on the unit/household in outbreak
- Our Provincial Infection Prevention and Control team continues to monitor the number of respiratory cases

Provincial Lab testing Memo updated May 2, 2023.

- Now that respiratory season has ended the Provincial Lab have updated their respiratory testing criteria and will be testing on a case by case basis. You can find the most up to date respiratory testing memo on the staff resource center under [Microbiology | Health PEI | Staff Resource Centre.](#)
- Processing of respiratory swabs has been expanded to include; Montague, Charlottetown, Summerside and Alberton which will increase turnaround times for results and access to Paxlovid.

COVID-19 testing- All stand-alone community testing clinics closed on April 28, 2023.

- With the closure of all community testing sites the public are no longer able to access a PCR test without a Physician/Nurse Practitioner order. Rapid Antigen tests are readily available across the province (access sites: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/covid-19-rapid-antigen-tests-self-test-kits>) and should be the first line of testing in the community for mild-moderate illness.

PAXLOVID CORE PRESCRIBING PROGRAM CLOSING EFFECTIVE MAY 31, 2023

- Since our community pharmacists have starting prescribing Paxlovid, the volume of referrals to this program has declined significantly, and the decision has been made to close the program effective May 31, 2023. [PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MEMO.](#)
- Islanders will still be able to access Paxlovid by calling their Primary Care Provider, the unaffiliated Virtual Care Program or their local Pharmacist. Thanks to all who participated in the program!

COVID Indicators moving to site level monitoring

- COVID-19 specific indicators will no longer be reported to ELT on a weekly basis however it is extremely important that all staff remain vigilant when it comes to COVID and report any increased trends in COVID activity to mitigate risk ASAP.
- Consider things like increased hospital admissions due to COVID, increased COVID positive staff, vaccination status of our vulnerable population (i.e. residents within LTC, Acute care admissions > 14 days), staff positive with COVID, etc.
- Real time reporting of staff illness on RStudio remains an important activity so that we can be vigilant about the impacts of illness on our staff and service delivery.

Post COVID website

- Launched fall of 2022 is focused on self-care patient education and resources and education for Health Care Providers. <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/post-covid-condition>.
- A Post COVID clinic is not being considered for PEI as our high vaccination rates, access to Paxlovid and infection of primarily Omicron variant has led to an overall limited prevalence of Post COVID Syndrome being reported in our province.

FirstLine app updated

- Paxlovid has been added as a FirstLine treatment along with Remdesivir for inpatients.

I hope this gives you an adequate overview of where we are with COVID operations today however, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to me at cabanks@ihis.org. A HUGE THANK YOU goes out to all staff. COVID has been challenging for all of us as changes were happening daily while we learned about this new and somewhat scary virus. Each and every one of you have been integral to our success in fighting COVID-19. Thank you for all that you do.

Cheryl Banks, R.N., M.N.

HPEI, Director of COVID Operations

I hope this gives you an adequate overview of where we are with COVID operations today however, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to me at cabanks@ihis.org. A HUGE THANK YOU goes out to all staff. COVID has been challenging for all of us as changes were happening daily while we learned about this new and somewhat scary virus. Each and every one of you have been integral to our success in fighting COVID-19. Thank you for all that you do.