

Health PEI Staff/Physician Respiratory Illness Reporting Protocol

Health PEI is moving into a state of managing COVID as we do with any other staff illness. Aligning with this, as we lift mandated PPE requirements, we may still experience waves of increased staff COVID-positivity. The following protocol will remain in place to protect our system, patients and most importantly our staff.

The protocol will allow us to monitor staffing strains due to respiratory illness in real time to support operations.

As a result of these changes and pressures the following protocol is being maintained

Update Effective April 18, 2023:

Managers/supervisors/designates must complete the following online form for all staff reporting a respiratory illness, influenza or COVID (see section B below for ongoing COVID-specific guidance):

The Health PEI Employee Respiratory Illness Reporting Form is available at <https://rstudiohiu.gpei.ca/form/contact-tracing/>. Please complete this form for all respiratory illness, influenza and COVID-positive staff cases, even if there are no workplace staff exposures.

The online forms must be completed within 24 hours

PLEASE NOTE EMAIL ADDRESS, if you have any questions about internal Health PEI contact tracing, work restrictions or extended testing schedules for staff or physicians, please contact

HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org

Work restrictions for positive cases of COVID and symptomatic staff with respiratory illnesses (including influenza) remains part of our protocols; similar to what we do for other communicable diseases. This is how we protect our patients, other staff and our facilities from transmission and outbreaks.

Note: Healthcare Workers (HCWs) without access to sick leave will be placed on unpaid sick leave and may apply for EI sickness benefits. Should the HCW be placed on unpaid sick leave, alternatively the HCW may request a pay out from their vacation, time in lieu or stat banks.

It is imperative that the privacy of Health PEI staff and physician's personal health information and work situation is upheld. Managers/supervisors/designates are reminded not to share with others the names of ill staff members or staff who are currently in or who have completed work restrictions. The ill staff member/physician may choose to share their personal health information with others.

(A) Respiratory Illness and Influenza Specific Guidance

HCWs who develop fever are excluded from work until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicines such as acetaminophen).

HCWs should be reminded that adherence to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette after returning to work is always important. The importance of performing frequent hand hygiene (especially before and after each patient contact and contact with respiratory secretions) should be reinforced, if symptoms such as cough and sneezing are still present.

(B) COVID Specific Guidance

5 day work restrictions remain in place for COVID-positive Health PEI HCWs. COVID-positive staff are ineligible to work during their period of work restriction. If immunocompromised, **10 full days** from date of symptom onset or date of positive test (whichever is earliest).

During the 5 day period of work restriction, HCWs can access their sick leave as per their respective collective agreement.

In the event a staff member is to return to work earlier than identified in this protocol (ie. their 5 days of work restriction), please email HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org for further direction.

Please note HPEI requires staff to test for COVID only. In the event staff are symptomatic and test negative for COVID, they should remain home until feeling well.

Staff/Physician COVID Contact Tracing and Work Restriction/Testing Protocol:

Managers/supervisors/designates are to identify, as soon as possible in consultation with the COVID positive employee/physician, **if work exposure to others has occurred:**

- If the positive employee wore a medical grade mask at all times around others, then **there is NO exposure to others.**
- If the positive employee/physician did NOT wear a medical grade mask around patients/clients/residents **then an exposure occurred to this population.**

- If the positive employee/physician did NOT wear a medical grade mask around co-workers, including those who works in other areas AND co-workers did not have masks and eye protection AND were less than 6 feet apart for 15 minutes (this does not have to be 15 minutes at one time, but is an accumulative 15 minutes over 24 hours), **then an exposure occurred.**

Managers/supervisors/designates are to ensure all employees/physicians who have self-identified they are close contacts of a positive case in the community follow the appropriate work isolation and/or testing schedule.

Managers/supervisors/designates must complete the **following online forms** once contact tracing has been completed:

1. **The Health PEI Employee Respiratory Illness Reporting Tracing Form** available at <https://rstudiohiu.gpei.ca/form/contact-tracing/> as part of the contact tracing process. **Please complete this form for all positive staff cases, even if there are no workplace staff exposures.**
2. **The Health PEI Employee Work Isolation Form** at <https://rstudiohiu.gpei.ca/hr/forms/work-isolation/>
 - Both forms can be accessed within the internal Health PEI network or from outside of the internal network using the VPN service. Please use a modern browser for the best experience (*i.e.* Chrome, Firefox, Opera).
 - If a manager/supervisor/designate does not have VPN and cannot connect to the Health PEI network, please email HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org for further direction.
Reminder: The online forms must be completed within 24 hours.
 - **Staff who are working from home but have been exposed to a positive case should be entered into the work isolation database.**
3. Managers/supervisor/designates must order Antigen Testing Kits as per below for staff/physicians who are work isolating and/or require testing.

Eligibility for Work Isolation and/or Testing Schedule

A staff/physician who is a contact of a positive case is someone:

- who had face to face interaction with indoors or outdoors for at least 15 minutes, including 15 minutes in total over a 24 hour period, or
- who was within 2 meters (6 feet) indoors for at least 15 minutes, including 15 minutes in total over a 24 hour period, or
- who had been hugging, kissing, or near someone who was coughing or sneezing, or
- who provided care to a positive case without the appropriate PPE.

Staff/physicians who are close contacts can work isolate and/or follow a testing schedule if the follow criteria can be met and maintained. The staff/physician is:

- A) not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms;
- B) able to follow the designated testing schedule AND
- C) able to wear their PPE appropriately at all times.

A staff/physician who will no longer have contact with the positive case will follow a testing schedule only. Work restrictions and a testing schedule must be followed when a staff/physician lives with someone with COVID who cannot self isolate away from the staff/physician.

Testing for Staff/Physician
when the positive case can live separately from healthcare worker

Antigen Testing Days (self administered test taken at home)
Day 4

Family Members Identified as non-household close contacts

Work Isolation/Testing for Staff/Physicians is no longer required for staff whose children are identified as a non-household close contact of a positive case.

If a staff member has a scenario which is not captured in the work isolation table below or for general work restrictions or positive staff questions, managers should email HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org for further direction.

Testing for Staff who will have ongoing contact with a positive case

	Work Isolation - diligent mask use, eating/drinking alone	Antigen Testing Days (self administered test taken at home)
If immunocompetent	5 days - if employee remains asymptomatic and negative	Days 1,3,5 Day 9
If immunocompromised	10 days - if employee asymptomatic and test negative	Days 1,3,5,7,10 Days 14

For staff who may have more than one family member test positive at different times, they must complete the appropriate ongoing contact with a positive case work restrictions until 5 days from when the first family member became symptomatic or tested positive (whichever was earliest). If the staff member remains asymptomatic and tests negative, they will need to continue with diligent mask use, eating/drinking alone and antigen test every 4 days for two consecutive days until the last positive case in the household is feeling well.

Positive Case Work Restrictions

Duration of Work Restrictions Regardless of Vaccination Status
5 full days from the date of symptom onset or date of positive test (whichever is earliest) AND feeling better (no fever and improving)
If Immunocompromised, 10 full days from the date of symptom onset or date of positive test (whichever is earliest) AND feeling better (no fever and improving)

Testing for Staff/Physicians who Recovered from COVID who Become Symptomatic

Situation	Testing	Work Restrictions
Symptomatic staff within 60 days of testing positive for COVID	Antigen test for two consecutive days	<p>If tests are negative and the staff feels well, then no work restrictions are required and staff may work</p> <p>If either test is positive, then isolate until symptoms resolve</p>
Symptomatic staff greater than 60 days of testing positive for COVID	Antigen test	<p>If negative and the staff feels well, then no work restrictions is required</p> <p>If positive, then follow positive case work restrictions</p>

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Access to Antigen Testing Kits

Managers may order Antigen testing kits for staff on work restrictions through their PPE Champion.

For after hours or weekend emergency allocations of **testing kits** please contact **SPD at the QEH (902-894-2039)**. These kits will be available for pickup only. Individual staff on work isolation cannot pick up the kits directly from Materials Management.