

## Respiratory Illness Guidance and Work Restrictions

Protocol for Healthcare Workers (HCWs)

Health PEI has moved into a state of managing COVID-19 as we do with any other staff illness. As a system, we will continue to experience waves of respiratory illness amongst healthcare workers, and the following protocol will remain in place to protect our system, our patients, and most importantly, our staff.

Questions regarding this protocol may be directed to ***HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org***.

### Respiratory Illness Guidance and Work Restrictions:

The 5 day isolation **and** mandate to test for COVID-19 are no longer required for staff with respiratory illness symptoms. Testing is not routine for COVID-19/influenza, unless clinically indicated.

Respiratory illnesses are expressed as fever greater than (38.5c)\* AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause). Signs and symptoms of respiratory illness include; fever\* or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, muscle/body aches, headache, and fatigue.

*\*It is important to note that not everyone with a respiratory illness will have a fever.*

If staff become unwell during their shift, don a mask.

Staff with respiratory illnesses can return to work under the following circumstances:

- Symptoms have markedly improved and fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen. The exception is a cough which may linger longer than other symptoms.
- They feel well enough to come to work.
- They can adhere to work isolation restrictions: diligent mask use at all times, good hand hygiene, and eating/drinking alone. Work isolation restrictions will remain in place until 5 full days since their symptoms began.

Healthcare workers are reminded that adherence to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette after returning to work is always important. The importance of performing frequent hand hygiene (per the 4 moments of hand hygiene and contact with respiratory secretions) should always be reinforced.

**Definition; Healthcare worker:** A person involved in providing care and/or services within Health PEI facilities and programs. This includes physicians, students, and contract workers (travel nurses).