
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Surveillance
Date: May 19, 2020
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To: **Long-term Care, Retirement Homes, Physicians, Assessment Centres**
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

The initial phase of universal swabbing for COVID-19 surveillance in Long-term Care (LTC) and Retirement Homes (RH) is almost complete. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) would like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts involved in accomplishing this task in a short timeframe. This could not have been achieved without the efforts of LTC and RH staff and the dedicated work of our community partners.

As cases of COVID-19 continue to decline, WDGPH would like to remind LTC and RH of the importance of ongoing surveillance for both staff and residents. WDGPH must be notified immediately of any symptomatic residents, and symptomatic residents should be tested under the guidance of WDGPH. The most current [COVID-19 guidance for LTC homes](#) should be used when deciding who should be tested.

- Though not recommended at this time, LTC and RH homes who wish to conduct further widespread testing in their facility should consult WDGPH before doing so. WDGPH can provide testing supplies, provided that the home has the capacity to complete this testing internally.
- Widespread testing will require an investigation number and coordination with WDGPH for swab ordering and pick up of samples.
- COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic staff upon hire is not currently recommended.
- The most current COVID-19 requisition should always be used. This requisition can be downloaded from the [Public Health Ontario Lab website](#).
- When completing any COVID-19 testing please use the facility physician or the resident's primary care provider as the ordering physician and copy the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. N. Mercer. This will ensure that all negative and positive results are received in the shortest turn around time.
- Your facility investigation number or an active outbreak number must be on every requisition as appropriate.
- WDGPH will continue to follow up on all positive results.
- Continue to contact WDGPH if you need additional swabs or have samples that need to be transported to the Public Health Ontario Lab