

## WDGPH Questions from the field:

### Q&A for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes

June 1, 2020

#### What should staff members do with their masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when going on break?

As per [CMOH Directive #3](#), all staff and essential visitors in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes are required to wear a surgical/procedure mask at all times for source control. When staff are not in contact with residents or in resident areas during their breaks, staff may remove their surgical/procedure mask but must remain two metres away from other staff to prevent staff to staff transmission of COVID-19.

Because of the need to conserve PPE, if the surgical/procedure mask can be re-used (i.e., it is not visibly soiled, wet, damaged, difficult to breathe through, did not make contact with a patient, or was not used in a patient care area with someone on Contact and Droplet Precautions), staff can store it in a clean paper bag, or in a cleanable container with a lid and label it with their name. Paper bags should be discarded after each use. Containers should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Wearing the mask improperly (such as pulling the mask down or wearing around the neck) can become a source of infection. Masks need to be fully removed when eating, drinking, or smoking following [proper donning and doffing procedures](#).

Other PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, eye protection, masks) should be properly donned and doffed in an identified location at the entrance/exit of the area where PPE is required (e.g., upon leaving a resident's room on Contact and Droplet Precautions) and carefully placed/disposed of in the appropriate receptacle. PPE should not be worn in any area that it is not required, as this can lead to increased transmission of microorganisms. Therefore, unless indicated, PPE should not be worn in the break room or outside the facility.

#### Should we implement universal gowning at our facility?

Gowns are to be worn as part of Additional Precautions, when indicated, based on a point of care risk assessment, professional judgement and evidence-based recommendations. In regard to COVID-19, if there are no confirmed or suspect cases of COVID-19 then the need for universal gowning would not be indicated at this time. This may be considered if an entire facility is deemed to be in an outbreak, with no ability to

cohort residents. [Best practice guidelines](#) indicate that PPE should not be worn unless indicated, as it can result in shortages of PPE (which is of critical importance with the current provincial shortages), may decrease staff adherence to routine practices (e.g., false sense of protection), and can increase risk for transmission of microorganisms.

## How should Long-Term Care and Retirement homes manage resident deaths during COVID-19?

Long-Term Care homes are required to follow the guidance provided by the Chief Coroner for Ontario for managing resident deaths during COVID-19. The following [webinar](#) and [one-pager](#) provides a step-by-step approach to managing resident deaths.

Retirement Homes are not required to change their current process for managing resident deaths. Funeral service providers should be screened as essential visitors to gain access to the home and the home should provide PPE as required.

Please note, for residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, Droplet and Contact Precautions must continue after the person has died.

### References

Chief Medical Officer of Health. [Directive #3: For Long Term Care Homes under the Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007](#). 23 May 2020.

Ministry of the Solicitor General. [Webinar: Managing resident deaths in Long-Term Care during COVID-19 outbreak](#). 9 April 2020.

Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in all Health Care Settings, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition](#). November 2012.

Public Health Ontario. [Universal Mask Use in Health Care Settings and Retirement Homes](#). 20 April 2020.

Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA). [RHRA Update](#). 23 April 2020.