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Working at Other Facilities During Outbreaks

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario government has recommended, and for some types of facilities mandated, that staff do not work at more than one health care facility. If your facility is experiencing an outbreak and need to utilize personnel who work at other facilities, this must be discussed with your health unit contact. See Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 Issued under Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA), R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7.

Guidance below can be used for staff working at more than one hospital as hospital workers continue to be allowed to work at more than one hospital.

Enteric Outbreaks

- Staff members/volunteers from facilities with active outbreaks should not work at other facilities until it has been 48 hours since they last worked at the affected facility and they are feeling well. This period may be modified if the causative agent is known. (Source: Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, 2018)
- Staff members/volunteers from facilities with active outbreaks who are experiencing symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting should not work at any facility until they have remained symptom free for 48 hours. Once a specific causative agent is known, disease-specific exclusions apply. (Source: Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, 2018)

Respiratory Outbreaks (Excluding Influenza & COVID-19)

- Staff members/volunteers from facilities with active outbreaks should not work at other facilities until it has been 72 hours since they last worked at the affected facility and they are not experiencing respiratory symptoms. This period may be modified if the causative agent is known. For example, if the cause of the outbreak is RSV, Parainfluenza, or Human metapneumovirus, consider lengthening this time to 5 days.
- Staff members/volunteers who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness should not work at any facility for 5 days from the onset of symptoms of a respiratory illness or until symptoms have resolved, whichever is shorter. This period may be modified if the causative agent is known. For example, during metapneumovirus, RSV, parainfluenza outbreaks consider extending exclusion to 8 days from symptom onset or until symptom-free, whichever is shorter.

Influenza Outbreaks

- Unimmunized staff members/volunteers from facilities with active outbreaks who are not receiving prophylactic therapy (e.g. Tamiflu) should not work at any facility until it has been 72 hours since they last worked at the affected facility and they are not experiencing respiratory symptoms.
- No exclusion needed for well staff members that are immunized and/or taking antivirals. They can continue to work at the affected facility and at other facilities without waiting 72 hours.
- Staff members/volunteers from an affected facility who are experiencing symptoms influenza should not work at any facility for 5 days from the onset of symptoms or until symptoms have resolved, whichever is shorter (Source: Control of Respiratory Infection Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, 2018).

COVID-19 Outbreaks

- Staff working at a hospital experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak cannot work at another hospital until it has been 14 days since they last worked at the outbreak hospital and they are well. Testing does not change this recommendation.
- Staff working at a hospital experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak who is working under 'work self-isolation' rules can only work at the outbreak hospital.