

February 17, 2021

**Memorandum To:** MCCSS-funded Transfer Payment Recipients (TPRs) and Children's Licenced Outside Paid Resources (OPRs) that provide Services and Supports in Congregate Living Settings

**From:** Karen Singh  
Director, Central Region

**Subject:** MCCSS COVID-19 Wave 2 Congregate Care  
**Notice of Enhanced Precautions**

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In February 2021 the ministry distributed a memo to MCCSS transfer payment recipients advising that your organization may be directed to implement measures in your MCCSS-funded congregate living settings in response to escalating or de-escalating levels of community risk related to COVID-19.

We are advising that your area of Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services has exhibited a change in the level of community risk related to COVID-19.

**What this means for your organization:**

Within 48 hours, all MCCSS-funded congregate living settings operated by your agency in the area of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services shall implement the following **enhanced precautions**:

**Infection Prevention Activities for Enhanced Precautions:**

- Ensure training has been completed on enhanced PPE protocols during outbreaks.
- Limit resident attendance of indoor community services and supports/day-programming to maximum group size of 5 people (Virtual delivery is **STRONGLY** encouraged as an alternative).

All staff must adhere to enhanced source protection measures by wearing both a surgical/ procedure mask AND eye protection while working within the congregate care setting. Please refer to the *Operational Guideline for COVID-19 Universal Source Control Measures 2.0* document for details about enhanced source control measures.

For information on active screening and IPAC best practices, please visit the Public Health Ontario [website](#) which contains many IPAC tools and resources for various settings.

## Visitors and Visiting

- Short-stay absences must be limited to activities that enable health and important life activities (e.g., school, work, doctors' appointments etc.), As a general rule, a resident is expected to practice physical distancing, hand hygiene and to wear a face covering (with support where necessary) when on a short stay absence. Residents must also adhere to any current local public health unit or municipal requirements related to local conditions.
  - Note: specific settings (e.g., schools and offices of regulated medical professionals) may have specific requirements and protocols regarding a short stay absence in those settings.
- Essential visits and essential overnight absences are permitted. “Essential visitors” are distinct from other visitor types in *The Visitor’s Guidelines 3.0: Re-Opening of Congregate Living Settings* so agencies can facilitate, on an individual resident basis, relationships that are necessary to maintain their health, wellness and safety in the context of overarching visitor restrictions. Agencies are strongly encouraged to consider the importance of the principles of emotional well-being and flexibility for their residents in addition to infection risks.
- Essential visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask AND eye protection at all times.
- Non-essential and designated indoor visits are prohibited.
- Limited, supervised, non-essential outdoor visits with physical distancing are permitted. Visits must be scheduled in advance and visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask AND eye protection at all times.
- Note for Youth Justice: All non-essential in person visits (indoor and outdoor) are restricted for youth justice at this time, and the use of technology to promote virtual visits is encouraged. Reintegration leaves for youth in youth justice facilities remain prohibited at this time.

Please continue to consult with The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services’ *Visitor’s Guidelines 3.0: Re-Opening of Congregate Living Settings* which provides additional information on outings and visits.

A handout outlining visitor permissions and restrictions based on community risk has been attached for your use in communicating these expectations to families and friends of residents.

Where in-person day programming and visitation/outings are restricted agencies are encouraged to facilitate virtual access to services and family/friend remote communication.

These measures shall remain in place until you are notified by the ministry that the community's level of COVID-related risk has changed.

### **Additional Resources and Reminders**

The following additional resources are available to support you with ensuring we continue to be vigilant in protecting our most vulnerable in congregate care settings:

- The Ministry of Health has additional setting- and topic-specific guidance [available](#).
- The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has many important [resources](#) for employers and workers to help stop the spread within workplaces.
- Your area also encouraged to speak to your local Public Health Units about how you can navigate the challenges of COVID-19 in your unique settings.

We strongly encourage all staff, volunteers or visitors who are experiencing ANY [COVID-19 symptoms](#), even if mild symptoms, to stay home, avoid going to work or visiting a congregate living setting and interacting with others for a minimum of 24 hours. COVID-19 testing should be pursued in accordance with current [provincial guidelines](#). Active screening practices at congregate living sites should be similarly rigorous. We also encourage you, your staff, your clients and visitors to download the COVID-19 alert mobile app to support strong contact tracing and help protect yourself and your community.

If you have questions about any of the measures outlined above, please contact your ministry program supervisor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K.S.', with a stylized flourish.

Karen Singh  
Director, Central Region