

Appendix: October 2022 Detailed Key Updates

- Please continue to strongly encourage the people you support and staff to get vaccinated and receive their booster dose(s) as soon as they are eligible.
 - Most people under the age of 65 should receive their booster dose at the recommended six-month interval. However, one can choose to book their next appointment three months after their last dose.
 - As of October 17th, 2022, everyone aged 12 and over is eligible to get a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose if they have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series.
- It is also important to get an annual flu shot. Starting November 1, flu shots will be available through health care providers, public health units and in participating pharmacies, and may safely be given at the same time, or at any time before or after COVID-19 vaccine, for individuals aged five years and older.
 - Children between six months and under five years are recommended to wait 14 days before or after the administration of another vaccine before getting their COVID-19 vaccine. Find out more at ontario.ca/flu.
- People who are at a higher risk of developing severe symptoms can access antiviral treatments such as Paxlovid if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Learn more about [COVID-19 treatments](#) and review your eligibility by using [Ontario's antiviral screener tool](#).
 - Service providers may also continue to work with health care providers to have higher-risk residents pre-assessed to determine whether they would be eligible for treatment.
- No single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of COVID-19. Masking, physical distancing, and good hand hygiene are important practices to continue at home and in the community.
 - The latest COVID-19 recommendations for congregate living settings can be found here: [COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units](#).
 - General COVID-19 public health advice can be found here: [Public health measures and advice | ontario.ca](#).
- As we once again move towards increased indoor activity, measures to support increased ventilation and indoor air quality remain important ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Service providers are reminded that:
 - Opening windows, for even a short amount of time, is an easy way to increase air circulation.
 - CO₂ monitors (which help detect areas with poor ventilation) are available for ordering to support improved air quality.
- Congregate living settings are recommended to develop Outbreak Preparedness Plans to support the operationalization of the recommendations outlined in the most recent

[COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units.](#)

- This includes developing contingencies as appropriate to their settings,
 - Plans should include policies and procedures for caring for a symptomatic or COVID positive client/resident, including supporting on-site isolation and developing plans for isolation off-site, if needed.
 - Refer to [Public Health Ontario's \(PHO's\) COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings Checklist.](#)
- The most effective approaches to staffing contingency planning for all service providers include intentional efforts to collaborate across service providers at the community level. Service providers should be participating and contributing to community level plans, while being mindful of collective agreement entitlements/rights.
 - Appendix A: Management of Staffing in Highest Risk Settings of MOH's [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#) outlines guidance for managing critical staffing shortages. It is the responsibility of the organization implementing the guidance to determine what early return to work option to use under their current circumstances and populations served.
 - Rapid antigen test (RAT) screening requirements for MCCSS-funded and/or licensed congregate living settings (excluding youth justice direct operated facilities) are to continue the use of RATs in accordance with the [October 2022 Interim Direction.](#)
 - Testing requirements for **adult developmental services day support programs** also remain unchanged.
 - RAT kits continue to be available to all service providers (including non-congregate living) through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP).
 - Organizations that are PASP participants in regions that have transitioned to the PPE Supply Portal may place separate orders for RATs due to temperature-controlled shipping requirements.
 - Per the September 1st memo, MCCSS's phased transition of PPE distribution to the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (MPBSD) and the PPE Supply Portal (PSP) continues.
 - If you have any questions about the transition, please contact the ministry's PPE team at MCCSSPPESupplies@ontario.ca.
 - The COVID-19 Residential Relief Fund (CRRF) and COVID-19 Community Supports Fund (CCSF) continue to be available to support organizations to respond to public health guidance and to help address exceptional support costs related to COVID-19 that a service provider is not able to manage within flexible use of their existing budget, or to mitigate risk through a service delivery model that reflects the hierarchy of control.
 - As public health guidance is updated and evolves, agencies should be reviewing their non-outbreak, planned expenditures to ensure alignment with CRRF/CCSF eligibility.