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MEDICAL ADVISORY

Provincial COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Testing Program Update

TO: Hamilton Physicians
Emergency Departments
LTCH Administrators/Directors of Care
Retirement Home Administrators/Directors of Care
Medical Laboratories
Pharmacies
Infection Control Professionals (**please inform Labs**)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Central West Medical Officers of Health
Academy of Medicine
Dr. Sarah Jarman, Chief of Staff, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Dr. Rahima Nenshi, Interim Senior Medical Director, Chair of the Medical Advisory, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Dr. Zain Chagla, Interim Senior Medical Director - Clinical Operations, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Dr. Erich Hanel, Interim Chief of Emergency Medicine, St. Joseph's Healthcare
Dr. Katalin Ivanyi, Interim Chief of Family Medicine, St. Joseph's Healthcare
Dr. Tamar Packer, VP Academic and Chief Medical Executive, Hamilton Health Sciences
Dr. Khalid Azzam, Physician-in-Chief – Hamilton Health Sciences
Dr. Kuldeep Sidhu – Chief of Emergency Medicine, Hamilton Health Sciences
Mr. Bruce Squires, President, McMaster Children's Hospital
Dr. Jennifer Everson, Vice President- Clinical, Ontario Health (West)

FROM: Dr. Brendan Lew, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: October 9, 2024

On Oct 1, 2024, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released a memo regarding COVID-19 Testing Eligibility, inclusive of both Rapid Antigen Tests and PCR testing (attached).

Effective immediately, publicly funded COVID-19 testing should only be available to:

- Ontarians eligible for COVID-19 treatment (i.e., symptomatic individuals who are immunocompromised, or 65 years of age or older, or those with high-risk medical conditions).
- People in high-risk and some congregate living settings (including long-term care homes) and other specific populations to support outbreak prevention and management.

The antigen test ordering pathway for eligible health system partners will continue to be through the [PPE Supply Portal](#).

Further information about COVID-19 testing eligibility and test access can be found at

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-testing-and-treatment>

Hamilton Public Health Services encourages Hamilton primary care providers and pharmacies consider ordering and providing Rapid Antigen Tests to eligible patients. Patients who have symptoms, meet eligibility requirements, and test positive for COVID-19 can be considered for [antiviral treatment](#). We also encourage Hamiltonians to speak with their health care provider in advance about treatment options and develop a treatment plan to avoid obstacles if they become sick.

Attachments:

Memorandum from Chief Medical Officer of Health Re: Test-to-Treat COVID-19 Testing Eligibility Updates for the 2024-25 Respiratory Virus Season, October 1, 2024