

Toronto Region

Région de Toronto

375 University Avenue,
5th floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1G1
Telephone : 416 325-0500
Fax : 416 325-0565
TTY : 416 325-3600

375, avenue University,
5^e étage
Toronto, ON M7A 1G1
Téléphone : 416 325-0500
Télec : 416 325-0565
ATS : 416 325-3600

September 14, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Sherri Rennie
Director, Toronto Region

RE: **MCCSS COVID-19 Updates – September 2021**

As our efforts to support service providers in managing and responding to the pandemic continue to evolve, I am writing to provide you with updates on several COVID-19-related items:

1) For all 'covered organizations' to which the vaccination policy requirement applies:

- A. Vaccination Policy – Implementation Reporting
- B. Provincial Antigen Screening Program

2) For congregate care residential service providers only:

- C. Distribution of high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to congregate care residential settings
- D. Reporting COVID-19 vaccination rates for congregate care residents
- E. COVID-19 Guidance for MCCSS-funded and Licensed Congregate Living Settings (September 2021)
- F. Continued risk monitoring and risk mitigation process

A. Vaccination Policy – Implementation Reporting

Note: Applies to all "covered organizations" subject to vaccination policy requirements.

Per the August 31, 2021, MCCSS correspondence, covered organizations will be required to report aggregate data related to vaccination policy implementation. The ministry is actively finalizing the mechanism for this reporting and a link will be provided by September 27, 2021.

In the interim, information on data reporting is being provided to support service providers in preparing information in advance of the first reporting deadline of October 7, 2021.

Additional details related to this reporting can be found in *Appendix 1: Vaccination Policy Data Collection and Reporting Requirements*.

B. Provincial Antigen Screening Program

Note: Applies to all “covered organizations” subject to vaccination policy requirements.

As part of ongoing efforts to aid in slowing the spread of COVID-19, and to support service provider implementation of COVID-19 vaccination policy requirements, the government is continuing to make rapid antigen test kits available to service providers at no cost through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP). The government has made changes to simplify and streamline the program for organizations.

MCCSS service providers can now apply to the program through [the Ontario Together Portal](#).

To expedite registration and access to tests when applying through the portal, service providers will require their Transfer Payment Recipient ID (TPR#) or CYFSA licensee number. Where applicants do not have either of these, an additional program eligibility validation step will be required prior to the issuing of tests.

The PASP also provides comprehensive [onboarding and training resources](#) to support implementation of regular antigen point of care testing as required and in accordance with [provincial testing guidance](#).

NOTE: New applicants should note that timelines from application to distribution can take five to seven business days with the first distribution of tests to begin on September 20, 2021.

C. Distribution of HEPA filters in congregate care settings

Note: Applies to congregate care residential service providers only.

As an extra layer of safety for residents and staff working in congregate residential settings, MCCSS will be distributing HEPA filters to support increased air quality and reduce the chance of potential exposure to COVID-19.

HEPA filters are air purification systems that capture a minimum of 99.97% of contaminants at 0.3 microns in size, and will kill germs and viruses, remove airborne chemicals and odours, and filter dust and pollen. The HEPA filters are portable, meet Canadian standards, and can be used in areas where residents and staff congregate.

The units are similar to those purchased to support air quality in Ontario's classrooms. Ontario's Science Table ** has given advice about use and placement including:

- The position of portable air cleaners in an indoor space should take into consideration the likelihood that aerosols/droplets are being captured by the intake and that the exhaust is not directed to occupants. Placement near the center of the room or near potential sources of SARS-CoV-2 droplets/aerosols (i.e., common rooms, dining rooms) is helpful.
- It is also important that HVAC and supplemental ventilation/filtration systems are regularly maintained according to manufacturers' instructions and that measures are checked with the goal of optimization (e.g., air exchange rates, outdoor air intake, temperature, humidity).

The first phase of distribution begins the week of September 13, 2021 to licensed children's residential sites and all VAW/anti-human trafficking and Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy sites. Two units will be automatically shipped to the addresses on file with the existing PPE distribution system. If your organizations would like to request additional units based on site specific requirements, please verify your requirements for additional units with your Ministry contact. If you are in the groupings listed above and do not receive HEPA filters by October 1, 2021, please contact MCCSSPPESupplies@ontario.ca.

All other residential organizations that currently do not have a HEPA filtration system in place, can place an order through the existing MCCSS PPE web portal **no later than September 17, 2021**.

Please note:

- As supply is limited, the Ministry is making available a maximum of two HEPA filters per residential site. Large sites with more than 20 residents should have a discussion with their appropriate Ministry contact to determine if additional HEPA filters may be required and orders may be adjusted for larger sites to go above the two HEPA filter maximum.
- Three types of HEPA filter units are available on the web order portal (see *Appendix 2 - HEPA Filter Product Information*), one being wall mounted which requires the organization to manage the wall mount installation. Distribution of units will occur throughout September and October with prioritization of sites in communities with prevalence rates of 25/100K.

** [School Operation for the 2021-2022 Academic Year in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic - Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table \(covid19-sciencetable.ca\)](#). See section: [Achieving and Maintaining Adequate Air Quality through Ventilation and Filtration](#).

MCCSS Web Portal Link: [MCCSS Web Portal](#) (Please place an order for HEPA filters only, do not include PPE items in your cart).

Order Deadline: September 17, 2021

All other HEPA filter related inquiries can be directed to MCCSSPPESupplies@ontario.ca.

*In accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

D. Reporting COVID-19 Vaccination Rates for Congregate Care Residents

Note: Applies to congregate care residential service providers only.

Per the August 30, 2021 memo, MCCSS is requesting that congregate care residential service providers begin collecting information related to residents' vaccination status in preparation for the September 23, 2021 reporting date. Additional clarifying information has been provided in *Appendix 4 – COVID-19 Updates - Q&As for Service Providers*.

The Ministry is actively finalizing the mechanism for this reporting and a link will be provided by September 20, 2021.

E. COVID-19 Guidance for MCCSS-funded and Licensed Congregate Living Settings – August 2021 (Appendix 3)

Note: Applies to congregate care residential service providers only.

Updates in the **August 2021** version include:

- Revised - definition for “fully vaccinated”
- Revised - definition of an essential visitor
- Revised - rapid antigen screening applicability (per MOH guidance)
- New - protocols for residents returning from absences and/or new admissions/transfers.

F. Risk Monitoring and Risk Mitigation Monitoring

Note: Applies to congregate care residential service providers only.

The Ministry is continuing to emphasize the importance of being prepared for and mitigating the impact of site-specific COVID cases and localized community outbreaks as we go through the phases of re-opening and the next evolving phases of the pandemic. As part of our regular monitoring, Ministry staff will reach out to agencies where there is a positive case or there is a high prevalence of COVID in the community. This conversation focuses on identifying further support that is needed and connecting agencies to resources that may be of assistance. The Ministry is committed to engaging with and building on proactive discussions to support service providers in responding to key risk areas in a timely and effective way, leveraging a range of resources, tools and field expertise across sectors.

To further support service providers, the following documents have also been attached:

- MCCSS COVID-19 Updates – Q&As for Service Providers (*appendix 4*)
- MCCSS COVID-19 Vaccination Policy - Q&As for CTCs (*appendix 5*)

Placing agencies and/or agencies who contract with a third party for the provision of services, are asked to please share relevant information with any unlicensed outside paid resources (OPRs)/third parties.

If you have questions or concerns on any of these updates, please contact your MCCSS program supervisor or ministry contact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherri Rennie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sherri Rennie
Director, Toronto Region