

Updated Executive Officer Notice: Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies: Eligibility Criteria

February 19, 2021

This Executive Officer Notice (and the accompanying Updated Executive Officer Notice: Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies: Prerequisites, Billing Requirements, and Record Requirements, and Qs and As) replaces all previous Executive Officer (EO) materials with regard to pharmacy services related to COVID-19 PCR testing. Updates in this notice provide important information relating to Patient Eligibility and Investigation Numbers.

Patient Eligibility – Effective February 19, 2021

Individuals are eligible for these pharmacy services if they are asymptomatic for COVID-19 (i.e. not showing symptoms), have had no close contact to someone who is confirmed as having COVID-19, are not part of a specific outbreak investigation, and are part of a targeted testing campaign by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility or a local public health unit (see list below). Please note that these criteria may change from time to time as the pandemic response evolves in the province. The most up-to-date information for pharmacies regarding patient eligibility will be included in this EO Notice, as updated from time to time.

As of **February 19, 2021**, the following classes of persons are part of a targeted testing campaign:

- a. Residents, workers or visitors of long-term care homes
- b. Residents or workers of retirement homes
- c. Residents or workers in homeless shelters or other congregate settings
- d. International students who have passed their 14-day quarantine period
- e. Farm workers
- f. Individuals who self-identify as Indigenous
- g. Staff working in schools (including supply and specialty teachers), school boards, and child care settings¹

¹ An investigation number must be assigned to the individual's school, school board, or child care setting by the Public Health Ontario Laboratory to be eligible for testing.

- h. Individuals, and one accompanying caregiver, with written prior approval for out-of-country medical services from the General Manager, OHIP
- i. Individuals who are travelling into remote/isolated First Nation and Indigenous communities for work purposes.

Eligibility includes individuals who are eligible Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) recipients, non-ODB recipients and those without Ontario health card numbers. No eligible person will be charged for pharmacy services related to PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing, even if they do not have an Ontario health card.

Individuals attending and working in post-secondary education, students and children who attend schools or child care settings, and household members of staff of schools, child care settings, and school boards are not eligible for PCR testing at pharmacies at this time unless they fall into one of the other targeted testing groups outlined above.

Investigation Numbers

In order to successfully monitor COVID-19 rates of infection in long-term care homes/retirement homes, schools, school boards, and child care settings, a list of Investigation Numbers associated with each of these target settings has been assigned by the Public Health Ontario Laboratory. This list will be made available to participating pharmacies.

It is **mandatory** for pharmacists to include the applicable Investigation Number on the laboratory requisition forms for the following individuals:

- Residents, workers or visitors of long-term care homes/retirement homes
- Staff working in schools, school boards, and child care settings.

Individuals should be reminded to provide the name of their long-term care home/retirement home, school, school board, or child care setting when booking and attending their appointment to facilitate this process. Pharmacies must cross-reference the information provided by the individual with the lists of target settings provided by the Ministry of Health to confirm the individual's eligibility.

The list of Investigation Numbers may be subject to change. The ministry will notify pharmacies of any changes.

Background

As of **September 25, 2020**, select pharmacies are eligible to provide specimen collection for PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing at no cost to eligible persons, if certain terms and conditions are met.

As of December 11, 2020, individuals who require a COVID-19 test for international travel clearance purposes **no** longer qualify for publicly funded pharmacy services related to PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing or publicly funded PCR COVID-19 testing at an assessment centre.