

Update to Executive Officer Notice: Publicly Funded COVID-19 Testing Services in Ontario Pharmacies

December 31, 2021

This is a further update to the Executive Officer (EO) Notice: Publicly Funded COVID-19 Testing Services in Ontario Pharmacies and accompanying Questions and Answers (Qs & As) dated November 18, 2021. Updates to the EO Notice and Q & As were previously made on November 27 and December 1, 2021. This latest update replaces those previous updates and will be reflected in new consolidated versions of the EO Notice and Qs & As available on the ministry's website at a later date. Until the new consolidated versions are published, this update shall be deemed to replace the patient eligibility information in the EO Notice and Q&As dated November 18, 2021.

For clarity, this update constitutes a Ministry policy that pharmacy operators must comply with when submitting claims for payment to the Ministry for publicly funded COVID-19 testing services. Compliance with all Ministry policies is required under section 3.2 of the Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement for Pharmacy Operators.

Update: Effective December 31, 2021:

Patient Eligibility

Pharmacy services related to publicly funded COVID-19 testing may be offered to, or arranged for, individuals described as eligible or recommended for testing in the attached COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge (the "Guidance"), which includes but is not limited to¹ the groups of persons listed below. In the event of a conflict between this update document and the Guidance, the Guidance applies.

- [Symptomatic](#)² people who fall into one of the following groups:
 - Hospitalized patients

¹ This list may change from time to time. Please review the Ministry's attached COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge for the most up to date eligibility criteria.

² Symptomatic is defined as having at least one symptom or sign from the [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#).

- Patients seeking emergency medical care, at the discretion of the treating clinician
- Patient-facing healthcare workers
- Staff, volunteers, residents/inpatients, essential care providers, and visitors in hospitals and congregate living settings, including Long-Term Care, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, temporary foreign worker settings, and correctional institutions
- Symptomatic outpatients for whom COVID-19 treatment is being considered
 - includes those aged 70 years or older who have a risk factor including obesity (BMI ≥ 30), dialysis or stage 5 kidney disease (eGFR < 15 mL/min/1.73 m²), diabetes, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability of any severity, sickle cell disease, receiving active cancer treatment, solid organ or stem cell transplant recipients, or aged 50 years or older if First Nations, Inuit, or Métis with any of those risk factors³
- Symptomatic people who are underhoused or homeless
- Symptomatic elementary and secondary students and education staff who have received a PCR self-collection kit through their school
- Symptomatic/asymptomatic people who are from First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities and individuals travelling into these communities for work
- Symptomatic /asymptomatic people on admission/transfer to or from hospital or congregate living setting
- High risk contacts and asymptomatic/symptomatic people in the context of confirmed or suspected outbreaks in highest risk⁴ settings, including hospitals, long-term care, retirement homes, other congregate living settings and institutions, and other settings as directed by the local public health unit
- Individuals, and one accompanying caregiver, with written prior approval for out-of-country medical services from the General Manager, OHIP
- Asymptomatic testing in hospital, long-term care, retirement homes and other congregate living settings and institutions as per provincial guidance and/or Directives, or as directed by public health units

Additional Information:

For pharmacies: For billing inquiries, please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public: Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282

³ Science Table: COVID-19 Advisory for Ontario: <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/clinical-practice-guideline-summary-recommended-drugs-and-biologics-in-adult-patients-with-covid-19-version-6-0/>

⁴ Highest risk settings include hospitals, Long-Term Care, retirement homes, congregate living settings (see page 10-11 of attached COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge). All other settings would be considered non-highest risk.