

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère de la Santé  
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September 15, 2015

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Health workers, health sector employers and other health system partners

RE: Update on MERS-CoV

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The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Health Ontario continue to monitor the risk posed by the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Recent reports from the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) have identified a growing number of MERS-CoV cases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Most of these cases are associated with an outbreak occurring in a hospital in Riyadh city.

The ministry has recently updated its [Guidance for Health Workers and Health Sector Employers on MERS-CoV](#) which now includes a fact sheet that health workers can use to support persons under investigation (PUIs) and confirmed cases of MERS-CoV that are discharged to be cared for in the home.

I encourage health workers and health sector employers to review the information on this website regularly to ensure you are following the latest guidance. Although the risk posed by MERS-CoV in Ontario continues to be low, it is important that health workers maintain readiness to detect, investigate and manage cases that are imported to Ontario.

**Republic of Korea**

The Republic of Korea has made significant progress in the control of its outbreak of MERS-CoV, with no new cases reported since July 4, 2015. The ministry has updated its [PUI case definition](#) to remove the Republic of Korea. For more information on the MERS-CoV outbreak in the Republic of Korea, please visit the [WHO website](#).

**The Hajj**

The 2015 Hajj is taking place from approximately September 20 – 25, 2015 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This spiritual pilgrimage is the largest annual gathering in the world. As with other mass gathering events, the large numbers of people expected to be in attendance during this year's Hajj may increase the risk of transmission of certain infectious diseases, such as influenza, meningococcal disease and MERS-CoV.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has posted a [Travel Health Notice](#) about the 2015 Hajj, which health workers may wish to share with clients/patients that are travelling to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Ministry Contact Information**

The ministry is available to support you during urgent situations that may arise. You can contact the ministry on a 24/7 basis through the Health Care Provider Hotline at 1-866-212-2272.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health