

November 10, 2020

To: Community Living disABILITY Services Shift-Staffed Service Providers

Dear Service Provider,

Thank you for all of your work over the past several months. While this has been a difficult time for all Manitobans, service providers that support Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) participants have faced unique challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of CLDS participants and staff who support them is a priority for the Manitoba government.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Shift-staffed residential services are a critical service. In order to ensure the safety of staff and CLDS participants, the PPE provided to your sector, including masks, eye protection, gloves and gowns follows the provincial guidelines and is what is required for staff to safely provide these critical services.

At minimum, staff must wear a medical mask and protective eye wear during their shift. However, additional PPE requirements apply in homes where a facility resident is COVID-19 suspect or case. Please refer to *Circular 2020-184 – PPE requirements for CLDS shift-staffed residential service providers* for detailed information.

Please note that N95 masks are only required in situations where a facility resident is COVID-19 suspect or case and requires assistance with aerosol generating medical procedures, such as continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) or bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) machines.

For a N95 mask to be effective, the mask must be professionally fit-tested for the individual who will be wearing it. Medical-grade masks, such as those sent to service providers by the Department of Families, should be worn by staff working in shift-staffed residential homes in the vast majority of cases. The Department of Families is in the process of identifying CLDS participants who use CPAP and BiPAP machines and will provide more information about the supply of N95 masks shortly.

Prevention

As a reminder, practicing the fundamentals is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19. For staff in shift-staffed residential care facilities, this includes:

- self-screening for symptoms before attending work each day, using the questions at https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/covid19_screening_checklist.pdf or the online assessment tool at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

- staying home and not going to work when ill, even if your symptoms are very mild
- staying home and not going to work if you have been tested for COVID-19 and have not yet received the results
- washing/sanitizing your hands and covering your coughs and sneezes
- properly and consistently using PPE (as directed by the Department of Families)
- implementing increased environmental cleaning/disinfection

In closing, thank you again for your diligent efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brent Roussin, MD, JD, MPH, FRCPC
Manitoba Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living

cc. Catherine Gates, Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Service Delivery