

South East IPAC Hub Update

October 2023

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As the Hub team continues to re-build capacity, our Clinical IPAC Coordinators have been connecting with long-term care homes across HPE, KFL&A and LGL to organize proactive site visits and work directly with IPAC Leads to identify opportunities to develop and strengthen their home's IPAC program. We continue to receive requests to support homes in outbreak preparedness and response, and are also providing on-site IPAC education sessions to frontline staff.

Our team is currently assessing how we may be able to actively expand our services to other congregate care settings, and are planning to collaborate with public health units to help identify region-specific needs. Stay tuned in the coming months for future updates on this work.

We are happy to introduce our newest Hub Team member: **Alison Carvalho** holds her Honours Bachelor of Science from the University of Toronto and has successfully completed Centennial College's IPAC program. She has previous experience working in labs, health and safety, and infection prevention and control within various settings.

We are also excited to welcome back a previous member of the Hub Team, **Dana Finnegan-Yee**. Dana is a certified (CIC) Infection Prevention and Control Professional with 15 years of IPAC experience in a hospital setting. Dana is currently the Acting President for the IPAC EO chapter and is the Module 1 Instructor for the IPAC Canada Essentials in Infection Control course. She is a Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT) and an experienced educator registered with the Ontario College of Teachers.

Epidemiology Update

COVID-19 activity is still present in all regions, please check the following links for updates on **local** epidemiology: [HPE region](#), [KFL&A Region](#) & [LGL Region](#). For national-level data, please see the Public Health Agency of Canada's [COVID-19 updates](#). Public Health Ontario has also launched a new [provincial respiratory virus tool](#) that provides data on percent positivity, lab testing and outbreaks for COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory viruses.



IPAC Lead Community of Practice

KFL&A Summer Pilot

In the summer of 2023, KFL&A Public Health piloted a new community of practice (CoP) where IPAC Leads from long-term care, retirement homes and congregate living settings connected on a monthly basis to discuss hot topics in IPAC, share experiences and knowledge. Meetings were led by KFL&A's MPH student, Tiffany Harianto, and topics included outbreak management, hand hygiene, and antimicrobial resistant organisms.

Next Steps for IPAC Lead CoPs

The pilot program in KFL&A was well-received and offered a great networking and knowledge exchange opportunity for IPAC Leads. Based on these positive results, the Hub will collaborate with KFL&A to continue offering these CoPs in the future. We also look forward to exploring how we can partner with other health units to offer similar opportunities in LGL and HPE regions. Stay tuned for more updates on this exciting development!



Ideas to Promote Vaccination



1. Provide treats or tickets for a raffle prize upon vaccination
2. Host a “Lunch and Learn” to combat common vaccine misconceptions
3. Share your personal vaccine experience with hesitant residents/patients/clients/staff and why vaccination is important to you
4. Co-administer vaccines to staff and residents/patients/clients
 - If vaccines are co-administered, immunization on separate limbs is recommended, however if the same limb must be used, the injection sites should be separated by at least 2.5 cm (1 inch).
5. Make vaccination accessible during or after work to increase uptake amongst staff by holding clinics or using a mobile cart

Fall Preparedness Checklist

Please see the Ministry’s new 2023 respiratory illness season preparedness checklist [here](#).

COVID-19

- Review [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#) and determine if your residents/patients/clients eligible
- Obtain and document resident/POA consent or refusal, based on eligibility
- Confirm [Resident Eligibility](#) for antiviral treatment (Paxlovid/Remdesivir), in case needed

INFLUENZA

- Obtain and document resident/POA consent or refusal for influenza vaccine and [Influenza Antivirals](#). The product monograph for Tamiflu is also available [here](#).
- Follow your facility’s Influenza Immunization policy by promoting uptake, encouraging staff to obtain prophylaxis proactively, and/or advise exclusion criteria during influenza outbreak

SUPPLIES

- Ensure ample supply of PPE, discard any expired PPE. Access [PPE Supply Portal](#) if eligible
- Ensure ample supply of cleaning and disinfecting products (health care-grade disinfectants/virucidal and sporicidal claims)
- Ensure testing kits are available (RATs, PCRs, enteric kits, etc.) - check expiry dates

National Infection Control Week: October 16-20, 2023

National IPAC Week was a time to highlight the importance of good infection control practices and celebrate your home’s dedication to keeping residents, staff, volunteers and visitors safe!

GIVEAWAY ALERT!

To help spotlight your efforts and share ideas for future IPAC week activities, we are asking homes to submit photos and summaries of your IPAC week activities to include in our next newsletter. Those who provide submissions will have a chance to win one of four **Tim Hortons giftcards** from the Hub! Please confirm permission to share any photos before sending your submissions to

SEHubIntake@KingstonHSC.ca.

Public Health Laboratory Requisitions

Public Health Ontario updated its [General Test Requisition Form](#) September 2023. Please discard all copies of the old version(s) and going forward, use the updated version linked above.

Suspect/Confirmed Respiratory Outbreaks:

Limit of 4 samples will be routinely tested. Additional respiratory samples will undergo **FLUID** testing (Influenza A & B, RSV A/B, and SARS-CoV-2).

Respiratory Testing:

Ensure COVID-19 **and** MRVP (multiplex respiratory virus PCR) are both selected on the requisition.

Suspect/Confirmed Enteric Outbreaks:

Limit of 5 samples will be routinely tested. Testing will cease once two or more samples yield same gastrointestinal virus.

Ensure samples have a minimum of **2** patient/resident/client identifiers **AND** the date and time of collection.

Ensure lab requisitions are printed on green or coloured paper when outbreak is suspected or confirmed, along with the assigned outbreak number from Public Health.

General Test Requisition

Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario

ALL sections of the form must be completed by authorized health care providers for each specimen submitted, or testing may be delayed or cancelled. Verify that all testing requirements are met before collecting a specimen. For HIV, respiratory viruses, or culture isolate requests, use the dedicated requisitions available at: [publichealthontario.ca/requisitions](#).

For Public Health Ontario's laboratory use only:
Date Received (yyyy-mm-dd): _____ PHO Lab No.: _____

Ordering Healthcare Provider Information
Licence No.: _____ Healthcare Provider Full Name: _____
Org. Name: _____ Address: _____
City: _____ Postal Code: _____ Province: _____
Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Copy to Lab / Health Unit / Other Authorized Healthcare Provider
Licence No.: _____ Lab / Health Unit / Other Authorized Provider Name: _____
Org. Name: _____ Address: _____
City: _____ Postal Code: _____ Province: _____
Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Patient Information
Health Card No.: _____
Date of Birth (yyyy-mm-dd): _____ Sex: Male Female
Medical Record No.: _____
Last Name (per health card): _____
First Name (per health card): _____
Address: _____ Postal Code: _____
City: _____ Tel: _____

Specimen Information
Date Collected (yyyy-mm-dd): _____ Submitter Lab No.: _____
Whole Blood Serum Plasma
Bone Marrow Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Nasopharyngeal Swab (NPS)
Oropharyngeal / Throat Swab Sputum Bronchoalveolar Lavage (BAL)
Endocervical Swab Vaginal Swab Urethral Swab
Urine Rectal Swab Faeces

Patient Setting
 Clinic / Community ER (Not Admitted / Not Yet Determined) ER (Admitted)
 Inpatient (Non-ICU) ICU / CCU Congregate Living Setting

Testing Indication(s) / Criteria
 Diagnosis Screening Immune Status Follow-up / Convalescent
 Pregnancy / Perinatal Impaired Immunity Post-mortem

Other (Specify): _____

Signs / Symptoms
 No Signs / Symptoms Onset Date (yyyy-mm-dd): _____
 Fever Rash STI
 Gastrointestinal Respiratory Hepatitis Meningitis / Encephalitis
Other (Specify): _____

Relevant Exposure(s)
 None / Not Applicable Most Recent Date (yyyy-mm-dd): _____
 Occupational Exposure / Needlestick Injury (Specify): _____ Source Exposed

Other (Specify): _____

Relevant Travel(s)
 None / Not Applicable Most Recent Date (yyyy-mm-dd): _____
Travel Details: _____

Test(s) Requested
Enter each assay as per the [publichealthontario.ca/testing](#):
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

For routine hepatitis A, B or C serology, complete this section instead:

Hepatitis A Immune Status (IgA/IgG) Acute Infection (IgM/IgG, signs/symptoms info)
Hepatitis B Immune Status (anti-HBs) Chronic Infection (HBsAg + total anti-HBc)
 Acute Infection (anti-HBc + total anti-HBc + IgM/IgG + total anti-HBc) Pre-Chemotherapy (anti-HBc + HBsAg + total anti-HBc)
Hepatitis C Current / Past Infection (HCV total antibodies) No immune status test for HCV is currently available.

The personal health information is collected under the authority of the Personal Health Information Protection Act, s.36 (1)(c)(ii) for the purpose of clinical laboratory testing. If you have questions about the collection of this personal health information please contact the PHO's Laboratory Customer Service at 416-239-6858 or toll free 1-877-424-4867. P43D-000-1002, version 004 (September 2023).

Ontario

Outbreak Definitions

- 1. RESPIRATORY (as of September 2023)**
[Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix 1: Case Definitions and Disease-Specific Information](#) | Disease: Diseases caused by a novel coronavirus, including Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory syndrome (MERS) **or** [Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix 1: Case Definitions and Disease-Specific Information](#) | Disease: Respiratory Infection Outbreaks in Institutions and Public Hospitals
- 2. ENTERIC (as of May 2022)**
[Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix 1: Case Definition and Disease-Specific Information](#) | Disease: Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Institutions and Public Hospitals
- 3. Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (as of July 2022)**
[Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix 1: Case Definition and Disease-Specific Information](#) | Disease: Group A Streptococcal Disease, invasive (iGAS)

New RSV Vaccine Rollout in Ontario

This fall, the Ontario Ministry of Health will be rolling out a new [publicly funded RSV vaccination program](#) for individuals 60 years of age and older who are living in long-term care homes, Elder Care Lodges and select retirement homes.

Health Canada has approved GSK's recombinant adjuvanted vaccine, Arexvy, for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease caused by RSV in adults 60 years of age and older. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is currently reviewing the use of Arexvy and updated recommendations in the Canadian Immunization Guide will follow soon.

Public Health Ontario has also released [clinical considerations for the co-administration of RSV, COVID-19 and influenza vaccines](#) among older adults in long-term care homes. In this document, the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee has recommended the RSV vaccine be administered at least 14 days before or after the administration of COVID-19 or influenza vaccines.

For more information, the National Institute on Aging has developed a [webinar](#) about the new RSV vaccine and GSK's [product monograph](#) is also available.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Worldwide, RSV is estimated to affect 64 million people every year.
- In Canada, RSV is associated with an estimated 53 hospital admissions per 100,000 people over the age of 65.
- In the U.S., it is estimated 7% of adults 50 years and older with RSV are hospitalized due to their infection.

[\[source\]](#)

In Case You Missed It!

1. UPDATED: Self-assessment audit tool from Public Health Ontario

In September, PHO updated the [self-assessment audit tool for long-term care and retirement homes](#). This tool must be completed at least quarterly, or weekly during outbreaks.

2. UPDATED: IPAC checklist from Public Health Ontario

In September, PHO updated the [IPAC checklist for long-term care and retirement homes](#). This checklist helps guide IPAC leads in conducting assessments of the home.

3. NEW: Environmental cleaning and disinfecting resources from Public Health Ontario

In September, PHO released a suite of new resources to support [environmental cleaning and disinfection practices](#) in health care settings. Check out the link above for new checklists, signage, implementation guides, and data analysis templates. New [learning modules](#) are also available.

Contact the Hub

Service Request

To submit an intake request or question, please email us at SEHubIntake@KingstonHSC.ca

Feedback

We value our partner suggestions and feedback. If the SE IPAC Hub has provided your organization with services please take a minute to complete our [feedback survey](#) to help us improve our program further.