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October 3, 2024

From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Updated COVID-19 Testing Eligibility

Based on evidence from the Chief Medical Officer of Health to advance a Test-to-Treat approach, the Ministry of Health has updated its COVID-19 testing eligibility.

Effective immediately, publicly funded COVID-19 testing should only be available to:

- Ontarians eligible for COVID-19 treatment
- People in high-risk and some congregate living settings and other specific populations to support outbreak prevention and management.

Public Health is no longer a source for rapid antigen tests for the community. Individuals who are eligible for COVID-19 treatment are advised to be assessed by a primary care provider or pharmacist to determine if they should seek testing.

Please review the October 1 memo below from the Chief Medical Officer of Health for full details.

Dr. Joyce Lock
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Ministère de la Santé

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Healthcare Providers Participating in the Provincial Antigen Screening Program

FROM: Chief Medical Officer of Health and Health Programs and Delivery Division

DATE: October 1, 2024

RE: Test-to-Treat COVID-19 Testing Eligibility Updates for the Fall 2024-25 Respiratory Virus Season

This communication provides:

1. Updates on which sectors can continue to access rapid antigen tests via the PPE Supply Portal
2. Outlines new Test-to-Treat COVID-19 testing eligibility for the fall 2024-25 respiratory virus season.

Based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health to advance a Test-to-Treat approach, COVID-19 test eligibility (inclusive of both rapid antigen tests and PCR testing) will be updated to align with COVID-19 treatment eligibility. Effective immediately, publicly funded COVID-19 testing should only be available to:

1. Ontarians eligible for COVID-19 treatment (i.e., symptomatic individuals who are immunocompromised, or 65 years of age or older, or those with high-risk medical conditions).
2. People in high-risk and some congregate living settings (including long-term care homes) and other specific populations to support outbreak prevention and management.

Further information about COVID-19 testing eligibility and test access can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-testing-and-treatment>.

Long-term care homes and some congregate living settings can also order rapid antigen tests for use to support outbreak prevention and management, consistent with [relevant provincial guidance](#) or at the discretion of public health unit staff.

The antigen test ordering pathway for eligible health system partners will continue to be through the [PPE Supply Portal](#). For assistance in creating an account or accessing an

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existing account, or for any questions about orders and shipment, please contact SCO.Supplies@supplyontario.ca. Please note that the distribution of free rapid antigen tests under this program is voluntary and will not be reimbursed by the Ontario Government, and that rapid antigen tests ordered from the PPE Supply Portal, if distributed, must be distributed free-of-charge.

Sincerely,



Patrick Dicerni
Assistant Deputy Minister



Dr. Kieran Moore
Chief Medical Officer of Health

c: Dr. Fiona Kouyoumdjian, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Lilly Whitham, A/Director, Laboratories and Diagnostics Branch, Ministry of Health
Angie Wong, Director, Drug Programs Policy and Strategy Branch, Ministry of Health
Jackie Korecki, Chief Supply Chain Operations Officer, Supply Ontario
Michele Henry, Operational Director, Provincial Diagnostic Network, Ontario Health