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Policy Section:	COVID-19	Effective Date: July 2021
Prepared By:	RHRA/R. Nixon	Revision Date: September 2021
Subject:	Asymptomatic COVID-19 Screen Testing	


Purpose/Regulatory Standards

CMOH Directive #3, July 14, 2021. CMHO Directive # 6, August 17, 2021. Instructions Issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, August 30, 2021.

Definition: Also known as surveillance or targeted testing, COVID-19 screen testing is the routine, serial testing of asymptomatic individuals outside of outbreak or known exposure settings to identify staff infectious with COVID-19. (Note: **Symptomatic** individuals should not be on the premises. See policy GP-7-82 (COVID-19 Screening).)

RHRA Recommendation for Asymptomatic COVID-19 screen testing for retirement homes; July 16, 2021:

- Effective July 16, 2021, it is recommended that retirement homes have a policy on a routine asymptomatic screen test program that takes into account the risks and benefits of voluntary, routine, asymptomatic testing and aligns with their resources and needs, as determined by licensees. It is recommended that retirement homes align their policies with Public Health Ontario and Ministry of Health guidance on COVID-19 testing.
- Responding to new evidence on risk for reinfection. As of May 26, Ministry of Health guidance indicates individuals who have previously been diagnosed with and cleared of COVID-19 infection may resume asymptomatic screen testing after 90 days from their COVID-19 infection (based on the date of their positive result).
- Responding to new evidence on vaccine efficacy and/or breakthrough. Current evidence from the Ontario's COVID-19 Science Advisory Table and recommendations from the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee indicate that fully immunized individuals should be excluded from routine asymptomatic screen testing. The exclusion of fully immunized individuals has the added benefit of supporting provincial reopening by encouraging uptake among individuals who have not started or completed COVID-19 immunizations. Please note that fully immunized individuals should continue to be tested in the event of developing COVID-19 symptoms, following a high-risk exposure to a known COVID-19 case, and/or at the direction of local public health units.
- To ensure individuals impacted by screen testing policies are aware and informed of their responsibilities, retirement homes should post their asymptomatic screen testing policy on their website and in locations within the home that would be accessible by all visitors and residents, and regularly provide communications when there are updates to the policy.
- Retirement homes should also provide their asymptomatic screen testing policy to the contracted personal care service providers that provide care to residents in their home.
- Asymptomatic screen testing is not recommended for essential visitors or general visitors, regardless of their immunization status.

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Policy

All staff (including contracted personnel and volunteers/students) who fail to provide proof of being fully vaccinated to their supervisor, must undergo Asymptomatic COVID-19 Screen Testing as outlined below. See policy GP-7-81 (COVID-19 Vaccinations). This policy will be communicated as described under “Communication” below. Relevant employees are responsible for adhering to the test frequencies outlined in this policy and for contacting the Director of Care if a test is required. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Procedure:

1. All staff (including contracted personnel and volunteers/students) who are not fully vaccinated will undergo Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) for COVID-19, conducted by the Home, as follows:
 - Those who work one shift or less per week will be tested prior to commencing work **on each day**.
 - All others (i.e. the majority) will be tested **twice per week**, on non-consecutive days.
2. Routine, asymptomatic testing should not interfere with testing as directed by Public Health. This means that any staff member who has been identified as a close contact of a positive case, who develops symptoms of COVID-19 or who is associated with an outbreak of COVID-19, will be directed to seek a PCR test either at the Home, or through an assessment centre, regardless of immunization status.

Home and Community Care Support Services Providers are excluded from this policy since each individual must provide proof of being fully vaccinated to enter the Home (per memo from Donna Cripps, Interim CEO, dated Sept. 2, 2021).

Communication:

This policy will be posted on the company’s website, on resident information boards in the Home, and on staff communication boards. The ED will provide a copy to personnel contracted by the Home or personal care service providers who provide services to residents.

<u>Cross References:</u> GP-7-81 (COVID-19 Vaccinations)	<u>Attachments:</u> None
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