

Ministry of Health

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July 17, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Health System Agencies and Organizations, Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

RE: Seasonal Respiratory Pathogens Readiness and Response Planning Guide

Dear Health System and Public Health Partners,

In Ontario, seasonal respiratory pathogens, such as influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19, historically circulate in highest numbers between November and April. As a result, the provincial health system experiences increased demand for patient care during this time.

For the 2023-2024 fall and winter seasons, the risk from influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and other respiratory pathogens is again expected to be atypical compared to pre-pandemic years, resulting in circulation of these pathogens early in the fall and increased impact on paediatric populations. While the risk of COVID-19 has been diminished through factors such as increased immunity and high vaccination rates, combined with other seasonal respiratory pathogens, COVID-19 continues to be

a threat to the health and wellbeing of Ontarians and will contribute to seasonal surge pressures on the health system.

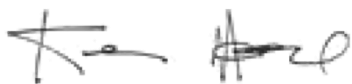
To support health system readiness, the Ministry of Health developed the Seasonal Respiratory Pathogens Readiness and Response Planning Guide (attached). This planning guide sets expectations for health system partners (i.e., agencies, organizations, employers and health care workers). It also includes the current respiratory pathogens risk outlook and planning scenarios to inform readiness efforts. The planning guide will be available on the [ministry website](#) in the coming days.

Leveraging key learnings from the COVID-19 emergency and in alignment with my 2022 Annual Report, *Being Ready* this planning guide establishes a new, strengthened approach to readiness for the annual surge in respiratory pathogens and builds ongoing resilience in the health system.

The ministry will continue to closely monitor key respiratory pathogen activity indicators, including international surveillance, to inform ongoing risk assessment for seasonal and surge respiratory pathogen activity. Information from these risk assessments will be regularly communicated to inform readiness and response efforts across the system.

I encourage you to share this memo and the planning guide within your organizations and with your system partners. Thank you for your excellent, continued efforts to ensure Ontarians are protected from seasonal respiratory pathogens.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC, FCAHS
Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health

c: Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Peter Kaftarian, Associate Deputy Minister, Clinical Care and Delivery
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Integration and Partnerships
Bernie Derible, Deputy Minister and Commissioner of Emergency Management,
Treasury Board Secretariat
Angie Wong, Assistant Deputy Minister, Executive Officer & General Manager,
Health Programs and Delivery

Greg Hein, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and French Language Services

Dr. Karima Velji, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice

Patrick Dicerni, Assistant Deputy Minister, Hospitals and Capital

Rhonda McMichael, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Partnerships

Susan Picarello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Health Services

Teresa Buchanan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Physician and Provider Services

Heather Levecque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management Strategy, Monitoring, & Intelligence

Jackie Korecki, Assistant Deputy Minister, Supply Chain Ontario

Michael Sherar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario

Dr. Jessica Hopkins, Chief Health Protection and Emergency Preparedness Officer, Public Health Ontario

Matthew Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health

Jamie Wallace, Chief Executive Officer, Supply Ontario