

Ministry of Health

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June 30, 2025

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. It is also a time of 'winter surge' where the health system is under additional strain from other impacts.

For the 2025-2026 fall and winter seasons, the risk from influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and other respiratory pathogens is anticipated to be similar to the previous two seasons and similar to pre-pandemic years. This results in seasonal peaks of RSV and other respiratory pathogens, with the potential for early and extended RSV activity and increased burden on elderly, long-term care home, and retirement homes. While the burden of RSV on infants has been diminished with the introduction of new RSV prevention products, there is still a risk to paediatric populations. The risk of COVID-19 has been diminished through factors such as increased population immunity; however, with ever evolving new variants, 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 has updated the Seasonal Respiratory Pathogen Guide V.2 (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.

Key areas of change in this year's version include updates to content on immunizations and testing. The Ministry of Health has revised the "vaccine" terminology to "immunization" to be inclusive of both vaccines and immunizing agents that are publicly funded. In addition, the Ministry of Health implemented a Test-to-Treat policy starting in the 2024-25 respiratory season, providing publicly funded respiratory virus testing to Ontarians eligible for treatment and supporting outbreak prevention management in high-risk congregate living settings for Ontarians. 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: Deborah Richardson, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Catherine Wang, Interim Associate Deputy Minister, Clinical Care and Delivery
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Integration and Partnerships
Eric Everett, Interim Deputy Minister and Commissioner of Emergency Management
Patrick Dicerni, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Officer, Health Programs and Delivery Division
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Danielle Jane, Assistant Deputy Minister, Hospitals and Capital
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Susan Picarello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Health Services Division
Teresa Buchanan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Physician and Provider Services Division

Heather Levecque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response

Jackie Korecki, Chief Operations Officer, Supply Chain Ontario

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

Dr. Jessica Hopkins, Vice President and Chief, Communicable Disease Control, ,
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Matthew Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health

Jamie Wallace, Chief Executive Officer, Supply Ontario