



Department of Families

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Ministère des Familles

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April 9, 2020

Dear Authority CEOs,

In providing essential supports to children and youth in care during the COVID- 19 pandemic, we have a shared responsibility to protect them, as well as workers. Please share this information with your mandated CFS agencies. Note that communication has been sent to the CFS community group care sector.

Shared Health has issued a new directive on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in residential facilities to slow down Manitoba's virus transmission rate. This new Shared Health directive comes into effect on Monday, April 13.

The PPE is being acquired and will be shipped to Authorities for distribution to agencies as soon as it is available. While we may feel anxiety during this period, rest assured that your PPE will be allocated. If PPE does not arrive by April 13, please remember practicing social distancing, washing our hands frequently, and not touching our face remains the best line of defense against transmission. Should agencies have available PPE in stock, priority access should be given to CFS workers who must attend emergency in-home visits, or emergency child apprehensions.

It is very important to share with staff that should a child in care be COVID-19 presumed or positive, Public Health will provide advice and direction. It is not the responsibility of CFS agencies to develop health care plans for residents if they contract the virus. Information has been sent to the community group care sector to this effect.

Another important message to impart to CFS agencies is that per the direction of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, foster parents do not need to wear PPE. This is because foster homes are family homes and we do not wear PPE when interacting with members of our family.

CFS Authorities and Agencies can support their staff by ensuring that workers know how and when to use PPE. Authorities and Agencies are instructed to ensure that PPE is used responsibly, such as prioritizing washing hands over wearing gloves where circumstances allow, to ensure that provincial PPE supplies are available to meet needs.

The information included below was shared with the adult disability and CFS group homes sectors. While more focused on in-home care, it includes excellent information that you need to support your workforce in knowing what PPE needs to be worn and when. As I am sure that you can appreciate, Public Health directives are adapting as the situation unfolds. Please be prepared to receive and implement new directives as they are issued.

CFS Authorities and Agencies are invited to participate in a conference call with Dr. Brent Roussin on April 15, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Dr. Roussin is Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer. Call details will be shared as soon as they are confirmed.

We want to hear from you. Please forward your questions to fspolicy@gov.mb.ca. We will invite Dr. Roussin to respond to as many questions as possible. Where necessary, we will follow up with written responses that will be shared with all.

Sincerely,

Sarah Thiele
ADM, Children and Youth Services

John Leggat,
Deputy Minister, Department of Families

Department of Families (FAM)

Health Management and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use

Shared Health has issued a new directive related to PPE use. Note that this directive is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated.

This is because we need to do our part to slow down the transmission rate in Manitoba.

Agencies can support their workforce by ensuring that workers know when to use PPE. At present, use of eye shields and masks should be continuous (always worn) to keep our residents safe. The one exception is if workers are visiting homes where no one is ill and the service can be provided from a social distance.

Please see attachments for clear instruction about wearing eye shields and masks between home visits and personal care.

PPE must be used responsibly to ensure that provincial supplies are available to meet needs. Washing hands is to be prioritized over wearing gloves.

Three of the most important things we should do to avoid transmission:

- hand washing before and after completing tasks
- not touching your face
- practicing social distancing when you can

Disposable gloves are only worn if required to perform intimate personal care (regular practice re. contact with bodily fluids) or if a resident in a home is presumed to have COVID-19, is COVID-19 positive or has cold/flu symptoms.

Gowns are only worn if a resident in a home is presumed to have COVID-19, is COVID-19 positive or has cold/flu symptoms. If you have washable gowns, they can be regularly laundered and reused.

Reusable dishwashing gloves should be used for cleaning duties and disinfected daily.

Applicable Shared Health Directives:

1. In home visits:

- ✓ Eye Shield always
- ✓ Mask always (N95 masks are not required and it is anticipated that Public Health will provide further direction on cloth mask use)
- ✓ Gloves: **only if** a resident is COVID-19 presumptive/positive or has cold/flu symptoms or when providing intimate personal care (contact with bodily fluid)
- ✓ Gown: **only if** a resident is COVID-19 presumptive/positive or has cold/flu symptoms

2. Residential care:

- ✓ Eye Shield always
- ✓ Mask always (N95 masks are not required and it is anticipated that Public Health will provide further direction on cloth mask use)
- ✓ Gloves: **only if** a resident COVID-19 presumptive/positive or has cold/flu symptoms or when providing intimate personal care care (contact with bodily fluid)
- ✓ Gown: **only if** a resident is COVID-19 presumptive/positive or has cold/flu symptoms

Important: Taking off PPE is a time of risk. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth and wash your hands before and after touching PPE. Follow instructions provided with your PPE order or visit <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/PPE-on.pdf>

Foster homes (CFS) and Home Shares (CLDS)

Tell foster homes and home shares that they do not need to wear PPE. Their homes are family homes and we do not put on PPE to take care of our family.

If a service provider attends their home on a visit, the service provider should follow the PPE rules noted above if they need to provide direct personal care. They do not need to put on PPE if they can provide the service from a social distance and no one in the home is ill.

Residents and Care Providers

Residents do not need to wear PPE if they are well.

If a resident becomes ill, do your best to isolate them. If they can wear a mask, they should do so. If they require personal care, staff should put on full PPE. Contact Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.

If a care provider becomes ill, they should leave the home and contact Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257. We trust that care providers recognize their responsibility and will leave only if they are concerned about transmission.

COVID Positive Care Providers/Residents – Isolation

The Provincial Government has procured isolation spaces (e.g., hotel rooms). These units will be used when necessary and under Public Health directive.

Plans are underway to ensure that care providers will be accommodated if there is a need to isolate a vulnerable adult or youth/child in care.

Important: If hospitalization is not required, efforts will be made to isolate positive residents in home settings. This may include moving residents who are positive to co-located homes. All decisions will be made in consultation with Public Health.

Important: If cold/flu symptoms are present, practice a tiered approach to care and revisit PPE directives.

Stay safe by washing your hands.

Government of Canada – Public Health Information is available online:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>

How organizations can support vulnerable populations during COVID-19 outbreaks

Take the time to learn the facts:

- Know more about COVID-19 by visiting www.gov.mb.ca/covid19.
- Keep up-to-date about the current situation in your community.

Take time to get prepared:

- Review your business continuity plan so you and your staff know what to do.
- Plan ahead for potential disruptions.
- Identify and plan how to continue providing the most critical services.
- Partner with organizations that provide similar services to share resources and strategies.
- Be prepared to answer questions from staff, volunteers, and clients.
- Consider stockpiling [general supplies and cleaning supplies](#).

Educate staff about ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Washing hands often with soap and hot water.
- Increasing access to hand hygiene and cough etiquette supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, tissues, waste containers).
- Cleaning frequently used spaces, surfaces and objects (kitchens, common areas, dining areas, desks, shared sleeping spaces, doorknobs, and faucets).
- Staying home when sick.
- Avoiding the use of shared personal items.
- Sharing information about what to do if staff or a client shows symptoms of becoming sick.
- Sharing steps about [how to care for and isolate people living in a shared home](#) (including the use of separate washrooms, if available).

Suggestions for supporting vulnerable populations during COVID-19 outbreaks

Provide clear instructions about how to wash hands and cover coughs using:

- the most commonly used language in the community
- short messages that explain simple steps they can take
- large font and graphics
- accessible instructions (e.g., braille, pictorial)
- by posting signs in common areas near sinks, entrances, intake areas, restrooms, sleeping areas, recreation areas, waiting rooms

Learn more on how to care for someone who is COVID positive in a co-living setting:

Government of Canada – Public Health

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/interim-guidance-cases-contacts.html#app1>