MEMO

Date: August 5, 2021
To: All health-care workers
From: COVID-19 Incident Command
Re: Changing Public Health Orders and Health System Guidance

Updated Public Health guidance includes the loosening of a number of restrictions for Manitobans in indoor public spaces and private businesses, to take effect August 7, 2021. This includes a move to recommend the wearing of masks, rather than to require they be worn.

In health care environments, where individuals at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are more likely to be present and where individuals exposed to – or suffering from – the virus are likely to seek care and treatment, masks will continue to be required – and must be worn - by all visitors and staff.

This means there is no change to the current requirement for masks to be worn in acute, long term care and community settings.

While vaccines are proven to be extremely effective, there remains a small risk that a fully vaccinated individual could contract or spread COVID-19. In health care settings, the continued use of masks is an added layer of protection that we can offer our patients/resident/clients, their family members and our colleagues.

As health-care workers, our obligation remains to protect the health and safety of those we care for and to ensure that our places of work, Manitoba’s hospitals, clinics, personal care homes and administrative/non-clinical areas, avoid or minimize outbreaks of COVID-19.

Medical masks alone do not replace the additional personal protective equipment that may be required according to your setting or situation, however they are proven to protect you – and your patients/residents/clients – from potential exposure and the requirement to isolate.

Medical masks will continue to be provided at entrances to our facilities and individuals, including patients, approved visitors and all staff, must wear a mask when entering and passing
through a health care facility. While exceptions exist for medical conditions that do not allow a mask to be worn, exemption cards from the internet will not be accepted.

For staff who frequent gyms within health care facilities, please note the following: capacity may increase depending on the physical layout of the space and will be clearly indicated on the facility entrance. Masks and physical distancing continue to be required.

Within cafeterias and other eating areas located within health care facilities, masks and physical distancing are required when entering and moving through the room. Once seated, provided physical distancing is maintained, masks may be removed. Labelled room capacity for staff rooms and eating areas must continue to be adhered to.

In-person meetings may occur in accordance with all Infection Prevention and Control Guidance, including physical distancing, room capacity and use of masks. Group sizes should remain at a maximum of 25 people, in spaces where physical distancing for that number can be maintained.

Staff are reminded to self-screen before work and to respect physical distancing (six feet, two metres) and labelled room capacity.

If you have not yet been fully vaccinated, please consider the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine not only for your own protection but also for the health and protection of those around you. Vaccines are safe and they work.

Thank you for your continued vigilance.