MEMO

Date: May 5, 2020 UPDATED
To: All health care providers
From: Dr. Brent Roussin
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
Lanette Siragusa, Provincial Lead Health System Integration & Quality, Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health

Re: COVID-19 – Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures and Epidemiologic Testing – Clarification re: Isolation Requirements

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, guidance documents are being regularly updated and made available at https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/ to ensure all health care providers have access to the most up-to-date information, protocols and guidance.

This memo provides updated guidance and replaces the April 10, 2020 memo on the same topic.

Specific questions have arisen related to community spread, asymptomatic patients, aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMPs) and the role of N95 respirators. Clarification regarding enhanced COVID-19 testing for epidemiologic purposes has also been requested. Both issues are addressed below.

1. Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP) and N95 Respirators

An updated list of AGMPs has been provided and is available at https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/aerosol-generating-medical-procedures-AGMPs.pdf.

In response to the following questions “Do I need to wear an N95 respirator for ALL AGMPs? And “If we must wear an N95 respirator for the AGMP, does this also mean the patient is a true COVID suspect and requires a private room?” please note the following:

- Patients who have been hospitalized for at least 14 days and have no symptoms that have prompted testing for COVID-19 or have been tested and are COVID-19
negative do not require private room for AGMP’s and a N95 respirator is not required.

- Patients who can provide a reliable history of self-isolation and physical distancing for essential activities for 14 days AND have been asymptomatic for those 14 days AND deny/are unaware of contact with a COVID-19 positive patient for the previous 14 days do not require a private room AGMP’s and a N95 respirator is not required.

- The combination of hospitalization and self-isolation/physical distancing at home for 14 days, asymptomatic during those 14 days AND with no known contact with a known COVID-19 patient during those 14 days do not require a private room for AGMP’s and a N95 respirator is not required.

Excluding this population, for patients in hospital/acute care facilities, an N95 respirator should be worn when performing an AGMP. This is recommended out of an abundance of caution recognizing that the vast majority of patients in hospital/acute care facilities who require AGMPs will not be COVID-19 positive or contagious to others.

Taking extra precautions during the AGMP does not change the status of the patient (in terms of labelling as COVID-19 suspect). For these reasons, isolation or single room accommodation following the AGMP is not required. Specifically, the room accommodation prior to the AGMP should be the same post AGMP.

As a reminder, provincial requirements for the appropriate use of personal protective equipment in non-AGMP situations are available at https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/ppe-provincial-requirements-acute-sub-acute.pdf

2. Enhanced COVID-19 Testing for Epidemiologic Purposes

To better understand the local epidemiology of COVID-19, all patients admitted for acute respiratory reasons will now have COVID-19 added to specimens collected and sent for respiratory testing. This testing alone does not require patients to be isolated.

If based on history, physical and/or imaging studies, the admitting physician concludes COVID-19 is the reason for admission, isolation and a single room is required.