

COVID-19

Guideline for the Resumption of Learner Clinical Placements

Manitoba continues to lift restrictions and public health orders associated with COVID-19. This is a phased approach, with each phase closely monitored for its impact on the spread of the virus.

Learners are an essential component of a properly functioning health care system. In recognition of the negative impact that a delay in the graduation of learners due to deferred learner clinical placements (“placements”) will have on the availability of health care human resources, the resumption of learner clinical placements, with appropriate safeguards in place, is supported.

To assist health care settings and educational institutions in understanding what this means for the resumption of learner clinical placements, the following guidance is offered. In the event a health care facility determines it cannot support the safe resumption of placements, discussion with leadership of the affected educational institution should occur.

During resumption, it is important to keep in mind that there is the potential for increased numbers of COVID-19 cases. The phased approach to reopening allows for the ongoing evaluation of COVID-19 activity as the pandemic evolves.

It should also be noted that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) can be expected to remain volatile for the foreseeable future. Ongoing diligence in conservation and appropriate utilization is necessary.

General Principles

- The care and safety of patients, clients, residents, learners and staff remain the highest priorities and will be central to decisions related to the resumption of placements during the COVID-19 response.
- Participation in emergency situations and in response to infectious diseases are integral components of a health care education. Wherever possible, learners should not be excluded from working within the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic. All reasonable efforts to resume placements should be made.
- Placements may proceed where appropriate personal protective equipment (“PPE”) is available and appropriate precautions to ensure the safety of learners and staff are deployed.
- The availability of preceptors/supervisors and appropriate PPE for both learners and those responsible for their supervisions, may affect the resumption of placements.

Placements should not adversely affect the quality of patient care. Educators and preceptors should jointly consider their ability to maintain a reasonable workload and quality of patient care while overseeing the placement.

- If/Where the availability of PPE is limited, some placements may be limited.
- The decision to resume any individual placement should be based on consideration of the following indicators which may affect a health care service or facility's ability to meet the learner's educational objectives and learning outcomes:
 - Ability to ensure appropriate supervision (based on availability of staff and/or educational institution instructors);
 - Competency and ability of the individual learner; and
 - The extent to which services on units/programs/zones may be disrupted due to the COVID-19 response.
- It is important for learners to be offered quality learning opportunities during the placement. Learners should be provided with appropriate roles and responsibilities and should not perform any task that they would not be reasonably expected to perform within "normal" circumstances at their current stage of training. Observation and job shadowing experiences outside the learner's placement are strongly discouraged.
- Screening should remain in place. Learners should participate in screening and self-assessments for signs and symptoms of any illness and should not report to their site/service area assignment if they are ill. Any learner who becomes symptomatic should immediately self-isolate and report their illness to the site/service area and their educational institution to receive further instructions. Procedures and expectations for reporting illness to supervisors, preceptors and occupational health departments should be communicated prior to the resumption of the placement.
- Rigorous adherence to infection prevention and control protocols is essential for learners who will be returning to their placements. The following should be noted:
 - The movement/assignment of learners may be limited to certain areas of a health care facility or to a single health care facility in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- In the event a learner's placement is disrupted due to COVID-19 exposure, the health care facility/service and educational institution may discuss options to allow the learner to complete applicable course requirements.

Guidelines for Educational Institutions

- Learners should be made aware of the risks associated with the resumption of their placements.
- Educational institutions should advise learners of the requirements and protocols they will be expected to adhere to during their placement (e.g. availability and appropriate training re: PPE, hand hygiene and self-screening for symptoms and exposure prior to entering a health care facility).
- Educational institutions should consider the competency and ability of learners when determining the most appropriate placement.
- Educational institutions should determine if sufficient support resources (e.g. clinical instructors and supervisors) are available to meet learner needs.
- Educational institutions should confirm that learners understand the principles of donning and doffing PPE prior to beginning a placement. In recognition of the ongoing volatility of PPE supply, learners may not be assigned to certain facilities if an N95 would be required.
- Educational institutions should have a process in place for learners to declare or be assessed for the risk of severe disease or poor outcomes (e.g. immunocompromised) prior to resuming placements.
- Learners should be aware of and comply with the applicable immunization policies of their placement.
- Educational institutions should have appropriate procedures in place to address any situation where a learner contracts COVID-19 in connection with a placement.
- While visitors to health care facilities continue to be limited, any meetings between learners and supervisors should be held either by virtual means or off-site to minimize the number of visitors to the site/service delivery location.

Guidelines for Health Care Facilities and Services

- The highest priority for learners is their safe educational experience. With the exception of learners in a role that is considered staff (e.g. medical residents), learners are not considered staff and learners may not be assigned to roles or responsibilities outside their normal placement duties without advance consultation with educational institutions.
- Health care facilities should determine the degree to which placements will affect PPE

supply and assign learners appropriately to maintain good stewardship of resources.

- Learners should be provided with the same PPE as employees performing similar work, and facilities must offer appropriate training regarding the donning and doffing of the PPE to be used during the learner's placement.
- Health care settings should limit the number of staff and students performing aerosol generating procedures ("AGMP") in order to conserve the availability of N95 respirators. However, if performing AGMPs is a core part of the practice and is a required aspect of the learner's placement, efforts should be made by the site/service and supervisor/proctor to accommodate the learner on a case-by-case basis.
- Health care settings and facilities should be aware of any capacity limitations that would affect the orientation and onboarding of learners.
- Learners should complete or redo applicable hand washing education as per site/service policy.
- Health care settings should confirm the availability of preceptors. The site/service delivery area/facility should confirm that the learner can safely and appropriately participate in a placement.