Date: UPDATED March 11, 2021
To: All health-care workers
From: Dr. Perry Gray
Chief Medical Officer, Shared Health
Lanette Siragusa
Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health

Re: COVID-19 – Use of Masks in Health Care Facilities - Updated

Updated guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommends the use of medical masks by all visitors to acute health-care facilities and personal care homes.

Manitoba acute care facilities and personal care homes will be implementing this change beginning Monday, March 15, 2021.

There is no change in primary care or community settings at this time.

Health Care Workers – Physicians and Staff

The requirement to wear a medical mask extends to staff working in acute care facilities and personal care homes, including those that work in non-clinical areas.

Staff – including staff that work in non-clinical areas - will have access to a medical mask in a designated location near the facility entry. They will be asked to doff their personal non-medical mask and don a medical mask prior to travelling through the facility.

This does not replace the need for appropriate use of additional facility-provided PPE according to the zone. It also does not replace the need for ongoing vigilance and adherence to public health advice and infection prevention and control protocols.

Visitors (Designated Family Caregivers, Essential Care Partners, Vendors) and Outpatients

Patients seeking care at emergency departments, urgent care centres and/or clinics as well as those visiting a personal care home resident or acute care facility will be provided with a medical mask at the point of screening or entry. They will be asked to doff their personal non-medical mask and don a medical mask prior to entering the facility.
Essential care partners and visitors designated “ORANGE ZONE” (e.g. essential travelers) will continue to be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Any airway opening (mouth, nose, stoma and/or tracheostomy) should be covered. For those with tracheostomy/stoma, a bandana, scarf or other appropriate covering may be used.

**Age and Medical Exceptions**

Children under the age of five and individuals with medical conditions unrelated to COVID-19, including breathing or cognitive difficulties, that prevent them from safely wearing a mask are exempted from this requirement. Persons who are unable to put on or remove their mask without assistance are similarly exempted.

**Supporting Documents and Resources**

Updated screening tools, patient/resident and family letters, signage, etc. will be available at [https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/](https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/) on or before March 15, 2021.

An email with updated links will be distributed via the COVID-19 Daily Update email on the morning of March 15, 2021.

Thank you for your support in sharing this information with staff, patients, families and outpatients.