

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Chief Medical Officer of Health

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MEMORANDUM**TO:** Board of Health Chairs
Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health**Re:** Amendments to the Protocol under the Ontario Public Health Standards –
Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2015

I am writing to inform you of the following changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS):

- The *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2008* has been replaced with the *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2015*.

The changes to the Protocol were made by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) based on input from Public Health Ontario (PHO) and public health units.

Amendments in the *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2015* include:

- Revision of language throughout the protocol to provide clarity, including clarifying expectations regarding investigation and management of outbreaks in retirement homes;
- Revision of the language to be inclusive of inspections related to *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI) outbreaks in hospital settings;
- Distinguishing between requirements for respiratory, gastroenteritis, CDI and other outbreaks;
- Re-organization of information to help clarify each step of the outbreak management process including the board of health's role in confirming the existence of an outbreak and declaring an outbreak; and
- Providing updated resources and references to be consulted in outbreak management and for best practices in infection prevention and control.

The new *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2015* is attached for your reference and will come into effect immediately.

It will be available in English and French, respectively, through the OPHS website at the following links:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/institutional_facility_outbreak.pdf

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/fr/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/institutional_facility_outbreakf.pdf

The ministry will communicate further details regarding the changes to the *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2015* to public health units via regular communications to ensure continued compliance with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the OPHS.

I would like to express my thanks to you and your staff for your ongoing work in upholding the OPHS and Protocols to ensure the continued strength of the public health system in Ontario.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC
Interim Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachments

c: Roselle Martino, Executive Director, Public Health Division
Nina Arron, Director, Public Health Policy and Programs Branch, Public Health Division
Paulina Salamo, A/Director, Public Health Standards, Practice and Accountability Branch, Public Health Division
Dr. Peter Donnelly, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario
Dr. George Pasut, Vice-President, Science and Public Health, Public Health Ontario
Lisa Fortuna, Director, Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, Public Health Ontario