

Updated Executive Officer Notice: Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies: Eligibility Criteria

April 7 2021

This Executive Officer Notice replaces the previous Executive Officer (EO) notice with regard to patient eligibility for pharmacy services related to COVID-19 PCR testing that was effective March 5, 2021. Updates in this notice provide important information relating to Patient Eligibility and Investigation Numbers.

Patient Eligibility – Effective April 7, 2021

Individuals are eligible for COVID-19 PCR testing if they are asymptomatic for COVID-19 (i.e. not showing symptoms), have had no close contact to someone who is confirmed as having COVID-19, are not part of a specific outbreak investigation, and are part of a targeted testing campaign by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility or a local public health unit (see list below). Please note that these criteria may change from time to time as the pandemic response evolves in the province. The most up-to-date information for pharmacies regarding patient eligibility will be included in this EO Notice, as updated from time to time.

As of **April 7, 2021**, the following classes of persons are part of a targeted testing campaign:

1. Residents, workers (including support workers), visitors (including caregivers) and government inspectors of long-term care homes;
2. Residents, workers (including support workers), visitors (including caregivers) and government inspectors of retirement homes;
3. Residents or workers in homeless shelters or other congregate settings;
4. International students who have passed their 14-day quarantine period;
5. Farm workers;
6. Individuals who self-identify as Indigenous;
7. Individuals, and one accompanying caregiver, with written prior approval for out-of-country medical services from the General Manager, OHIP;
8. Individuals who are travelling into remote/isolated First Nation and Indigenous communities for work purposes; and

9. Staff working in elementary and secondary public and private schools (including school bus drivers, supply and specialty teachers), school boards, and child care settings¹.

In addition, the following individuals are part of a targeted testing campaign and eligible for PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing at pharmacies during the specified dates only:

- **From April 7 – 11, 2021, asymptomatic Ontario Police College (OPC) recruits who are returning to the OPC.**
- **From April 12 – 18, 2021, asymptomatic students of Ontario public and private schools and childcare centres located within those schools¹.**

Eligibility includes individuals who are eligible Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) recipients, non-ODB recipients and those without Ontario health card numbers. No eligible person will be charged for pharmacy services related to PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing, even if they do not have an Ontario health card.

For clarity, the following classes of persons are not eligible for publicly funded pharmacy services related to PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing, unless they fall into one of the targeted testing groups described above:

- Individuals attending and working in post-secondary education.
- Household members of staff of public and private elementary and secondary schools, child care settings, and school boards.
- Asymptomatic individuals with a positive result obtained through a point-of-care (POC) test and requiring a confirmatory test.

Investigation Numbers

In order to successfully monitor COVID-19 rates of infection in long-term care homes, retirement homes, schools, school boards, and child care settings, a list of Investigation Numbers associated with each of these target settings has been assigned by the Public Health Ontario Laboratory. This list will be made available to participating pharmacies.

It is **mandatory** for pharmacists to include the applicable Investigation Number on the laboratory requisition forms for the following individuals:

- Residents, workers (including support workers), visitors (including caregivers) and government inspectors of long-term care homes.
- Residents, workers (including support workers), visitors (including caregivers) and government inspectors of retirement homes.

¹ An investigation number must be assigned to the individual's school, school board, or child care setting by the Public Health Ontario Laboratory to be eligible for testing. If the individual's school is not on the list of investigation numbers provided, pharmacists may use the investigation number of the individual's affiliated school board. Pharmacists may also use the investigation number of the school where the child care centre is located.

- Staff working in elementary and secondary public and private schools (including school bus drivers, supply and specialty teachers), school boards, and child care settings.

Individuals should be reminded to provide the name of their long-term care home, retirement home, school, school board, or child care setting when booking and attending their appointment to facilitate this process. Pharmacies must cross-reference the information provided by the individual with the lists of target settings provided by the Ministry of Health to confirm the individual's eligibility.

The list of Investigation Numbers may be subject to change. The ministry will notify pharmacies of any changes.

Background

As of **September 25, 2020**, select pharmacies are eligible to provide specimen collection for PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing at no cost to eligible persons, if certain terms and conditions are met.

As of December 11, 2020, individuals who require a COVID-19 test for international travel clearance purposes **no** longer qualify for publicly funded pharmacy services related to PCR COVID-19 laboratory testing or publicly funded PCR COVID-19 testing at an assessment centre.

Prior EO Notices

- Updated Executive Officer Notice: Expansion of Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies (Eligibility and Investigation Numbers) (**Effective March 5, 2021**).
- Updated Executive Officer Notice: Expansion of Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies (Eligibility and Investigation Numbers) (**Effective February 19, 2021**).
- Executive Officer Notice: Update - Expansion of Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies (**Effective December 11, 2020**).
- Notice from the Executive Officer: Expansion of Specimen Collection for COVID-19 Testing of At-Risk Asymptomatic Persons through Ontario Pharmacies (**November 5, 2020**).