

Update to Executive Officer Notice: Publicly Funded COVID-19 Testing Services in Ontario Pharmacies

April 12, 2022

This is a further update to the Executive Officer (EO) Notice: Publicly Funded COVID-19 Testing Services in Ontario Pharmacies and accompanying Questions and Answers (Qs & As) dated March 21, 2022. Updates to the EO Notice and Q & As were previously made on November 27, December 1, 2021, December 31, 2021, January 17, and March 21, 2022. This latest update replaces those previous updates and will be reflected in new consolidated versions of the EO Notice and Qs & As available on the ministry's website at a later date. Until the new consolidated versions are published, this update shall be deemed to replace the patient eligibility information in the EO Notice and Q&As dated March 21, 2022.

For clarity, this update constitutes a Ministry policy that pharmacy operators must comply with when submitting claims for payment to the Ministry for publicly funded COVID-19 testing services. Compliance with all Ministry policies is required under section 3.2 of the Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement for Pharmacy Operators.

Update: Effective April 12, 2022:

Patient Eligibility

Pharmacy services related to publicly funded COVID-19 testing may be offered to, or arranged for, individuals described as eligible or recommended for testing in the [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca) (the "Guidance"), which includes but is not limited to¹ the groups of persons listed below. In the event of a conflict between this update document and the Guidance, the Guidance applies.

Symptomatic people who fall into one of the following groups:

- People aged 70 years and older
- People aged 60 years and older who have less than three doses of COVID-19 vaccine
- People who are [immunocompromised](#)

¹ This list may change from time to time. Please review the Ministry's [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca) for the most up to date eligibility criteria.

- Adults aged 18 years and older who have had less than three doses of COVID-19 vaccine and have risk conditions:
 - obesity (BMI \geq 30kg/m²)
 - diabetes
 - heart disease, hypertension, congestive heart failure
 - chronic respiratory disease, including cystic fibrosis
 - cerebral palsy
 - intellectual disability
 - sickle cell disease
 - moderate or severe kidney disease (eGFR <60mL/min)
 - moderate or severe liver disease (e.g., Child Pugh Class B or C cirrhosis)
- Other [people at higher risk of severe disease](#) who may be eligible for COVID-19 treatment if they tested positive
- Pregnant people
- Patient-facing healthcare workers
- Staff, volunteers, residents/inpatients, essential care providers, and visitors in highest risk settings
 - Highest risk settings include: hospitals (including complex continuing care facilities and paramedic services), and congregate living settings² with medically and socially vulnerable individuals, including, but not limited to long-term care homes, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, correctional institutions, and hospital schools.
- Household members of staff in highest risk settings and patient-facing health care workers
- Home and community care workers
- Staff and students in Provincial and Demonstration Schools
- Elementary and secondary students and education staff who have received a PCR self-collection kit through their school
- International Agriculture Workers in congregate living settings
- Patients seeking emergency medical care, at the discretion of the treating clinician
- Other outpatients for whom a diagnostic test is required for clinical management, at the discretion of the treating clinician
- People who are underhoused or experiencing homelessness
- First responders, including fire, police and paramedics

² See [the COVID-19: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations Guidance](#) for more information. *People in each of these groups may be eligible for COVID-19 treatment if they test positive, based on clinical criteria including risk factors and vaccination status.

Symptomatic/asymptomatic people:

- Individuals who are from a First Nation, Inuit, Métis community, and/or who self-identify as First Nation, Inuit, and Métis, and their household members
- Individuals travelling into First Nation, Inuit, Métis communities for work
- On admission/transfer to or from hospital or congregate living setting
- People in the context of confirmed or suspected outbreaks in highest risk settings as directed by the local public health unit
- Individuals, and one accompanying caregiver, with written prior approval for out-of-country medical services from the General Manager, OHIP
- Any patient with a scheduled surgical procedure requiring a general anaesthetic 24-48 hours prior to procedure date
- Newborns born to people with confirmed COVID-19 at the time of birth within 24 hours of delivery, with a repeat test at 48 hours after birth if baseline test is negative, or if the parental test results are pending at the time of discharge
- People 24-48 hours prior to treatment for cancer or prior to hemodialysis, at the discretion of the treating clinician.

Additional Information:

For pharmacies: For billing inquiries, please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public: Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282