

Webinar Recap for February 14th, 2022

LTC+: Acting on Pandemic Learning Together

TOPIC

Update on Vaccines and Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) in Long-Term Care

KEY AREA(S)

Preparation, Prevention

SPEAKER(S)

- **Jim Ayukekbong** – Vice President of Infection Prevention and Control for Southbridge Care Homes; Editor-In-Chief of IPAC Canada Journal of Infection Control
- **Bryna Warshawsky** – Medical Advisor, Public Health Agency of Canada

OBJECTIVES

- To share updates regarding vaccination and IPAC guidelines to support LTC homes through the current wave of COVID-19 and beyond

SUMMARY

- Updated vaccine guidelines in response to the latest wave of COVID-19 include:
 - The importance of receiving a booster dose 6-months after the end of the primary series of two doses, or a three dose primary series for immunocompromised individuals followed by a booster dose 6 months later
 - For those with recent COVID-19 infection (within the past three months), the booster dose is suggested to be offered three months from the onset of infection or six months after the second dose in the primary series of vaccines was administered, whichever period is longer
- Updated IPAC guidelines in response to the latest wave of COVID-19 include:
 - There are currently four circulating subtypes of the omicron variant, there is a general easing of restrictions across the provinces, however, IPAC measures, including continuous screening and testing in LTC, are to be maintained
 - The number of people allowed into the LTC home at a time should continue to ensure physical distancing, as much as possible

- Vaccination should continue to be encouraged to reduce risk of significant illness and hospitalization
- In light of the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant, N95 masks should be worn by those in LTC during an outbreak
- In the long-term, IPAC standards in LTC homes should be improved, including better ventilation. The present, portable air filtration devices supplied to long-term care homes are only a temporary measure, future long-term care construction standards should take into consideration ventilation and air exchange systems to support infection control of potential airborne diseases.
- Due to unknown variables, including changes in circulating COVID-19 strains and diminished vaccine protection over time, LTC homes should anticipate and prepare for further vaccine doses to be rapidly administered to residents, staff and visitors as the sector continues to navigate and mitigate COVID-19
- Regarding IPAC measures, the sector should anticipate the following:
 - The sustainability of IPAC practices and compliance, beyond COVID-19, despite sector fatigue. Each LTC should have a dedicated IPAC lead with expertise in infection prevention and control.
 - IPAC consciousness and education among residents, visitors and the workforce in LTC
 - Enhanced IPAC capacity and standards to better prevent and manage future COVID-19 and other emerging disease outbreaks
- Policies which require staff and visitors to be vaccinated, particularly with a booster dose, offer some individual protection against infection and reduced risk of transmission of COVID-19, and are an important strategy for ensuring that homes are prepared for future outbreaks as measures are rolled back.
- Strategies for long term and sustainable practices and policies related to IPAC should ensure that there is a key focus in breaking the 'chain of infection' through continuous screening and testing, and excluding entry to LTC for symptomatic or infected individuals. The universal use of medical mask as source control from the portal of entry and portal of exit.
- To address fatigue with vaccine and IPAC policies and procedures, for staff and those living in LTC and their essential care partners, the following is recommended
 - Understand and celebrate vaccine effectiveness and continue to reinforce education on the goal of vaccination.
 - Plan to be prepared for additional booster doses

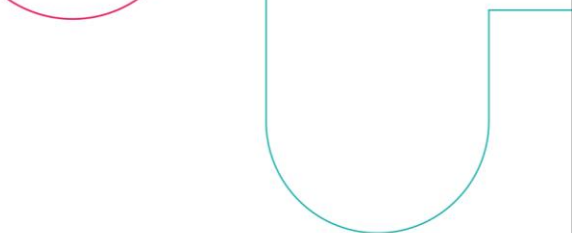
- Offer mental health and counseling support
- Encourage staff to take time off to disconnect
- Offer employees recognition and appreciation
- Ensure compliance to the highest standards of IPAC
- Ensure the incorporation of IPAC as part of resident care
- Endemicity suggests a stable, constant level of disease transmission. If COVID-19 is declared endemic to the population in Canada, the following are recommendations regarding vaccination and IPAC policies and practices in LTC moving forward:
 - Ensure resiliency in the workforce, including allowing time to rest and disconnect
 - Reinforce communication
 - Improve and sustaining IPAC standards
 - Embed and reinforce IPAC measures, while acknowledging the individual-level responsibility required at all levels to mitigate the risk of infection, and to protect residents and staff
 - Ensure outbreak preparedness, including plans for alternatives to lockdowns, if needed, to protect residents' mental and physical health
 - Ensure equity in policies and practices developed, as a more systemic approach to protecting those disproportionately affected by crises

RESOURCES SHARED

- [Reimagining Care for Older Adults Report](#)
- [Promising Practices for Supporting Long-Term Care Provider Resilience](#)
- [Practices of Interest to Support In-Person Family Presence and Communication with Families](#)
- [What We Heard Report #1: Findings from HSO's Inaugural National Survey on Long-Term Care](#)

WEBINAR RECORDING

- [Watch the full webinar here!](#)



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