



MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST

From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director on behalf of the Pandemic Team

Date: December 3, 2020

Re: New Directives from MCCSS; **Screening** and wearing of **Face Shields**
Please put in COVID-19 binders

Good day

We recognize that we messaged earlier in the week about enhanced PPE protocols and updated you on visits etc. but we just received new messaging that directly affects screening and the wearing of face shields. We have attached the actual correspondence from the Ministry so that you can review the full messaging.

New screening sheets have been completed for all areas of our organization; administrative offices, working in the congregate care settings (group homes), for essential visitors and families. Essentially you are now required to answer as to your awareness of the recommendations and restrictions in this community regarding gathering size, hand and respiratory hygiene and the use of face coverings and masks. Those working directly with people supported are being asked if they understand the expectations around PPE. **PLEASE** read the new screening sheets carefully. If you do not understand these new questions, please speak to a supervisor, manager, or director.

The Ministry has also enhanced source control measures which means.

- **All employees must wear both a surgical/procedure mask AND face shield while working within the congregate care setting.**
- All indoor visitors, regardless of designation (essential, non-essential and designated) must wear a surgical/procedure mask. **Where a physical distance of 2 meters or 6 feet cannot be maintained, visitors are advised to wear a surgical/procedure mask AND face shield.** Outdoor visitors are only required to use a face covering (e.g. non-medical/cloth mask)

At this time, we have suspended indoor visits for family unless someone is end of life, palliative or very ill. Please note the change with respect to face shields for families in these situations.

We are in the process of delivering extra paper bags to all of the locations as masks when removed for eating only, need to be stored in a paper bag. They should not be put on tables or desks without being in the bags. There should also be a designated area to clean shields. Since all locations have a laundry sink, this is the sink that should be utilized for cleaning of the shields. Shields were made available to all employees earlier in the year. We have extras and are delivering them to the homes to ensure everyone has access to a face shield. Anyone visiting the homes (supervisors, managers, directors, clinical employees etc.) must also wear shields with masks.

Please take the time to review these enhanced protocols. We appreciate this is a lot of information coming out at one time, but the Ministry is doing what it can to mitigate risk. **All of these changes are effective immediately. Please continue to use the screening sheets you have in all locations until the new ones are distributed in the mail bags on Tuesday.**

On another note, we have been asked why we aren't doing regular COVID testing on individuals and employees. At this time, Public health is only doing testing on people who have symptoms. Many people we support have been tested as well as employees who presented with symptoms. There are a couple of agencies similar to ours who are health funded not developmentally services funded who have received testing for their organizations. They are smaller agencies and are doing this through EMS. We have reached out to EMS as has other developmental services agencies to determine if any kind of regular testing can be done in our organization. Due to the current outbreaks in the City the demand on EMS at this time, we have not had an answer back on this.

We have also been asked about "pandemic pay". The Ford government announced new wage enhancement funding for certain front-line employees. This wage enhancement funding is different than pandemic pay that was initially introduced. It is based on continuation of emergency orders by the government and it is an application process to the Ministry. OPTIONS has submitted the application on behalf of the organization for employees who would qualify (those working in the congregate living settings). To date we have not heard back on the status of this application. The pay is retroactive to October 1. Once approval is given, we would proceed with payment of this wage enhancement funding.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep yourselves well and healthy and for all that you are doing in your work environments.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. J. [unclear]". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.