

**Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing**

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March 4, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Service Managers

FROM: Kate Manson-Smith
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

SUBJECT: Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) Practices in
Emergency Homeless Shelters

Dear Service Managers,

I'm writing you today to thank you for the service you are so tirelessly providing for Ontario's most vulnerable and to describe the next steps designed to ensure all our emergency homeless shelters are in a position to implement Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) best practices. These next steps build on the Outbreak Management Planning Attestations that all Service Managers signed last fall.

As you know, the province is currently experiencing the ongoing effects of a second wave of COVID-19 in the community. The emergency homeless shelter system is being impacted by this second wave, and the presence of COVID-19 variants of concern creates increased risk due to their potentially greater transmissibility.

The second wave is teaching us what we already knew – that IPAC best practices are vital to ensuring the safety of clients and staff.

Therefore, to support strengthened IPAC practices in shelters, I am requesting that each Service Manager report back to MMAH and provide the attached Infection, Prevention and Control Attestation (IPACA) confirming the following:

1. Each emergency homeless shelter, including temporary shelter facilities and hotels and motels used for self-isolation and/or emergency shelter overflow, has identified an individual in the organization to act as an IPAC lead.
2. The IPAC lead has completed IPAC practices education (using the training resources developed by Public Health Ontario, provided via a link in the memo below) and supports dissemination of IPAC resources, including training and education, and other knowledge to all staff in the shelter; and,
3. Each emergency homeless shelter, including temporary shelter facilities and hotels and motels used for self-isolation and/or emergency shelter overflow, will complete a self-audit in March 2021 using the COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings Checklist attached to this memo and linked below.

[COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention for Congregate Living Settings checklist](#)

4. Any gaps that are identified during the self-audit will be reported to the Service Manager and the relevant IPAC Hub (in non outbreak situations), as available, in order to identify and implement strategies to address identified gaps. Any exceptions to the third requirement (completing a self-audit) are listed in a template in the attestation along with the rationale for the exception and the planned next steps.

Service Managers can reach out to their local IPAC Hubs for help and further education as needed. For more information, or to be connected to your local IPAC Hub, Service Managers can contact EOCoperations.moh@ontario.ca. As a reminder, in the instance of potential active outbreaks, please contact your local public health unit only as they are the lead on any next steps.

MMAH has consulted with Ontario Health, the Ministry of Health and other partner ministries regarding what interventions have been most effective in other sectors. We heard that focusing on learning individual IPAC skills may be the most effective approach for staff and facilities that are working to strengthen the implementation of IPAC practices. Particularly, concentrating on correct hand hygiene and use of Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., donning and doffing PPE) skills is a recommended strategy. We encourage you to emphasize the importance of these skills within facilities in your service area.

I would also like to reinforce that the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) is intended to support Service Managers as they deal with the impact of COVID-19 in their communities. Service Managers are encouraged to consider how they can utilize their

SSRF funding to ensure the IPAC needs in their facilities are being met (e.g., supporting IPAC capacity through the use of an IPAC specialist and other services).

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) Training and Resources

Service Managers and shelters may access the IPAC practices education developed by Public Health Ontario at the link below. Please note this training is intended for both health and congregate care settings.

[COVID-19 IPAC Fundamentals Training | Public Health Ontario](#)

Individuals attempting to access the education modules will be asked to provide information describing their role and the Ontario Health region they are located in. From there you will be directed to a course which contains a variety of resources to learn about IPAC principles, such as Personal Protective Equipment, hand hygiene, screening, cohorting and environmental cleaning for non-clinical staff, or other modules depending on your role.

Additional Public Health Ontario IPAC resources to support congregate care sites can be found at the following link:

[COVID-19 Resources for Congregate Living Settings | Public Health Ontario](#)

Based on the data reported via the COVID-19 emergency shelter and congregate supportive housing surveys, we are only requiring Service Managers to attest that these IPAC lead and self-audit requirements will be met in emergency homeless shelters. However, we also encourage you to share these tools and requirements with other congregate care facilities in your area. We also want to clarify that IPAC hubs are available to all types of congregate care facilities to help address any identified gaps.

Our Municipal Services Offices Housing Team staff are available to support you in fulfilling this request. Please direct your attestations to the MMAH Housing Team Lead in your Municipal Service Office via email by no later than March 19, 2021.

Again, I want to thank you for your tremendous work to ensure the safety and health of vulnerable people in Ontario.

Yours truly,



Kate Manson-Smith
Deputy Minister

Cc: Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Darryl Wolk, Manager, Policy Development and Public Affairs, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Joshua Paul, ADM, Housing Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hannah Evans, ADM, Municipal Services Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Peter Kiatipis, Director, Community Housing Policy Branch
Rhona Duncan, Manager, Intergovernmental Affairs and Homelessness Unit
Municipal Services Office Housing Team Leads
Aly Alibhai, Municipal Services Division, Director Lead for Housing
Alison Faith-York, Municipal Services Division, Manager Lead for Housing
Dr. Dirk Huyer, Chief Coroner of Ontario, lead of the Provincial Preparedness and Outbreak Response Working Group
Jessica Hopkins, Medical Director, Health Protection, Communicable Diseases, Emergency Preparedness and Response
Alison Blair, ADM, Pandemic Response and Public Health Modernization, Ministry of Health

INFECTION, PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPAC) ATTESTATION

I, **[name here]**, being an **[officer title]** of **[insert Service Manager name]** (the “Service Manager”), hereby confirm and attest that:

1. Based on my review of the records of the Service Manager each emergency homeless shelter, including temporary shelter facilities and hotels and motels used for self-isolation and/or emergency shelter overflow, has identified an individual in the organization to act as an IPAC lead.
2. Based on my review of the records of the Service Manager this individual has completed IPAC practices education (using the training resources developed by Public Health Ontario, provided via a link in the memo below) and supports dissemination of IPAC resources, including training and education, and other knowledge to all staff in the shelter: and
3. Each emergency homeless shelter, including temporary shelter facilities and hotels and motels used for self-isolation and/or emergency shelter overflow, will complete a self-audit in March 2021 using the COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings Checklist attached to this memo and linked below.

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4. Any gaps that are identified during the self-audit will be reported to the Service Manager and the relevant IPAC Hub (in non outbreak situations), as available, in order to identify and implement strategies to address identified gaps. Any exceptions to the third requirement (completing a self-audit) are listed in the template below along with the rationale for the exception and the planned next steps.

Facility-Specific Exceptions		
Facility Name	Rationale	Planned Next Steps
		Please add rows as required

[Service Manager Name]

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Title: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Date: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

I have the authority to bind the Service Manager