



COVID-19 HR Recommendations: Multi-Employer Health Care Workers

Recommendations to support health care workers employed at multiple sites or organizations

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This document has been developed to provide health care organizations with guidance to support health care workers who work in more than one organization. For the purposes of this document, the term “health care workers” (HCWs) pertains to hospital employees, physicians, midwives, researchers, trainees, volunteers and contract employees, as well as health care workers in other settings such as home and community care, long-term care and retirement homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation. This general guidance is not intended to replace or supersede government directives or public health measures. Adapted approaches may be required to address unique, sector-specific, organizational, local or other exceptional circumstances and conditions.

Context

Ontario’s health care workers are an essential service that is critical to the successful management of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the frontlines of this global crisis, we need our teams to feel confident stepping forward to care for patients and to protect themselves. As a sector, we are fully committed to the safety and well-being of our people.

Many health care workers are employed by more than one organization across the health care system. This complement of part-time staff is vital to the health human resources strategy within hospitals and other organizations.

Common Principles

- HCWs are essential to the health and well-being of our society and our ability to manage and deliver services.
- HCWs are an essential service that is critical to the successful management of the pandemic. We are committed fully to ensuring the safety and well-being of all HCWs and those who they care for, while also ensuring sufficient capacity to provide care across the health care system.
- Many HCWs current work in more than one health care organization. Allowing HCWs to maintain employment at more than one organization supports their financial well-being and enables more flexible system deployment and response.
- HCWs represent a unique group that requires different considerations for multi-site employment during critical times.
- Individual organizations may choose to make additional recommendations above and beyond these recommendations, as appropriate to their setting and situation.

Recommendations:

To help maintain the ability to deliver critical health services across Ontario's health care system, it is recommended that:

- Organizations should not restrict HCWs from working for multiple organizations.
- HCWs should follow screening protocols in place at each and all of the organizations where they work, to help prevent and mitigate the risk of transmission to others.
- All organizations should follow all appropriate IPAC and regulatory standards to ensure a consistent approach to prevent and mitigate the risk of transmission.
- All organizations should provide clear instructions for employees on staff screening and sick leave reporting protocols, including the requirement to inform all employers/organizations if they become symptomatic, in accordance with each organization's processes.
- All asymptomatic HCWs who have been advised to self-isolate and work virtually where possible, may be required to only work at one organization for the duration of the self-isolation period
- HCWs working on a suspected or declared COVID-19 outbreak unit, a COVID-19 area within an organization, or an intensive care unit caring for probable or confirmed COVID cases may not be permitted to work elsewhere until the outbreak is cleared, or at the direction of the local public health unit or aligned with infection control practices. Organizational decisions regarding the deployment of resources in these circumstances will be made in a manner that balances the needs of patient care and safety aligned to local conditions.
- Organizations should proactively gather staffing reports to understand how many HCWs maintain employment at multiple sites, in the event that there is a requirement to re-assess and limit HCWs to one organization.