

Memorandum to: Child Care Licensees

From: Phil Graham
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division

Date: September 23, 2021

Subject: **Mandatory Immunization Disclosure Policy - Rapid Antigen Testing Updates – Extension of Pharmacy Access**

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to implement the mandatory immunization disclosure policy. The purpose of this memo is to provide updates on the rapid antigen testing component of this policy.

As you know, in accordance with the instructions issued by the CMOH, schools and child care programs must require that individuals who are not fully vaccinated submit to regular rapid antigen screening. Individuals subject to testing requirements **must provide verification of negative test results two times per week** as an added measure to protect child care settings from the risk of COVID-19.

As noted in the September 4th memo, rapid antigen tests will be provided at no cost to licensees and each licensed child care program has been assigned one of three methods of obtaining tests:

1. Direct Delivery for large operators
2. Pick-Up through the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Rapid Screen Initiative
3. Pick-Up at an Assigned School

For licensees receiving direct delivery of tests or picking up tests at a school, rapid antigen screening kits have already been shipped to school boards and child care licensees through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) distribution network.

If you require additional testing kits, please contact childcare_ontario@ontario.ca and provide details on the additional number of testing kits required to support immediate implementation.

As you are aware, the government authorized pharmacies to provide publicly funded COVID-19 rapid antigen testing services effective Tuesday, September 7, 2021 until Tuesday September 21, 2021. **To ensure access to testing for those school boards and child care licensees that may have a shortage of testing kits, access to pharmacy testing is being extended for eligible staff until October 1, 2021.** Per instructions provided on September 4th please ensure staff have valid ID and a letter from employer.

Please note, licensees assigned to pick-up tests through the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Rapid Screen Initiative are NOT eligible to use pharmacy based rapid antigen testing services and must obtain tests through their local chamber of commerce as soon as possible.

As a reminder, all organizations receiving free antigen screening tests must submit weekly reporting to the Ministry of Health (MOH). Using the Thrive app allows organizations to fully meet this requirement and would not require any additional, regular reporting to MOH.

Organization who choose not to use the Thrive app will be required to report into a centralized database, the Health Data Collection Service. Organizations will be onboarded on to the Health Data Collection Service and provided information and training (<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/COVID-19/Health-System-Response-Resources#panbio>) on how to submit data and register data entry persons. Data must be entered weekly by Friday at 11:59pm EST

For those organizations receiving rapid tests through a local chamber of commerce, reporting will be required through the chamber.

Licensees are also required to report aggregate depersonalized data on vaccine status of staff and providers on a monthly basis to the Ministry of Education.

Thank you for your efforts to comply with these requirements, and your on-going efforts to keep students, staff and our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham

c. Children Services Managers, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards