



JANUARY 18, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO: Toronto Region Academic Institutions, Toronto Region Hospitals
SUBJECT: Update on circulation of TAHSN outbreak notifications and on steps for learners transferring from a unit with and without an active COVID-19 outbreak

Effective January 18, 2022, Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN) will no longer circulate updates regarding Toronto Hospital units on outbreak. Toronto Region Hospitals will also stop notifying academic institutions or other hospitals of outbreaks in their units. Due to the volume of outbreaks in the system and the guidance currently in place regarding movement of staff/physicians/learners after working on an outbreak unit ([Appendix A](#)), the broad circulation of outbreak notifications no longer has significant impact on decision-making related to learner placements.

Information regarding outbreaks at individual hospitals is available through the following resources:

- Physical signage at the entrance of the unit that indicates the unit is undergoing outbreak
- Hospital's intranet (accessible to staff and learners placed at the hospital) and/or public website
- Public health websites ([Appendix B](#))

The learner will be responsible for understanding the implications of entering and/or working in an outbreak unit. Below are scenarios that may guide learners on what to do depending on whether their current unit has an outbreak* (note: please refer to [Appendix A](#) for TAHSN Infection, Prevention and Control's guidance on movement of staff/physicians/learners after working on the primary team of an outbreak unit):

*: *For all scenarios, a learner coming to UHN from an outbreak that is external to UHN should not notify Health Services. They only need to notify their Education Leaders. At UHN, Education Leaders refer to the leaders responsible for the learner's education at UHN (e.g., for undergrad MD learners, the physician responsible for the learner's rotation or elective/selective; for residents/fellows, the Residency/Fellowship Site Director/leader; for other learners this may be the Educator, Manager, etc.)*

Scenario 1: Learner is working in non-outbreak unit and moving to a different facility

Follow all Occupational Health requirements at both institutions.

Scenario 2: Learner is working in a non-outbreak unit and moving to a unit with a COVID-19 outbreak

Follow all Occupational Health requirements at both institutions. Ensure you are mask-fit tested and always wear an N95 mask and face shield during clinical encounters with all patients on the outbreak ward.

Scenario 3: Learner is working in a unit with an active COVID-19 outbreak and moving to different facility

Please advise your learners who are actively working on a COVID outbreak unit and who will be rotating to a new facility to follow the following steps, further to Appendix A:

- 1) Learner must be double- or triple- vaccinated AND asymptomatic to follow the steps 2 to 6 below.
- 2) In anticipating completion of placement/rotation at the unit, the learner should book an appointment for PCR test at the hospital. If a PCR test was already completed as part of outbreak point prevalence testing, it does not need to be repeated.
- 3) Wait for NEGATIVE PCR test and may continue to work/complete placement/rotation on outbreak unit while result is pending.



- 4) Once PCR test is confirmed negative, the learner is immediately fit to start work at new facility, but must inform the facility for further directions. The new facility will provide specific directions that will either advise contacting Occupational Health & Safety (e.g., email photo or copy of negative PCR result to Occupational Health and Safety) or advise contacting the Education leader at the new facility and uploading of PCR test may not be required.
- 5) Learner must practice work isolation protocols for a period of 10 days from last day worked on the outbreak unit (see attached) and follow any other specific requirements communicated by Occupational health and Safety of the new facility.
- 6) If any symptoms develop, the learner should be excluded immediately, undergo repeat PCR testing, and not return to work until cleared by Occupational Health and Safety team of the new facility.

Sincerely,

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Appendix A: TAHSN Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Guidance regarding movement of staff/physicians/learners after working on the primary team of an outbreak unit

This guidance is also available on the TAHSN public website [here](#).

Asymptomatic staff/physicians/learners will no longer be excluded after working as part of primary team** on an outbreak unit and scheduled to work in non-outbreak area. However, the following requirements remain in place:

For moving from outbreak unit to work or rotate in a different facility

1. Before starting a new shift or rotation in new facility, staff/physician/learner should undergo a PCR test. If PCR negative, they are automatically fit to work. If they have had a negative PCR test as part of the outbreak point prevalence, and it is negative, this does not need to be repeated.
2. Staff/physician/learner must still inform the facility where they are starting (occupational health and safety or education leader, depending on specific directions by the receiving facility) with date they left outbreak facility as primary team member, follow work self-isolation protocol for 10-days from last exposure on outbreak unit and any other measures required by the Occupational Health and Safety department of the receiving facility.
3. As always, healthy workplace policy must be strictly followed with exclusion from work if any symptoms develop, pending repeat PCR testing.

For moving from outbreak unit to non-outbreak areas within same facility

1. Those who worked in a primary role and moving to a non-outbreak area within the same facility, may do so on condition that any testing directed by IPAC as part of outbreak investigation was negative before doing so.
2. As always, healthy workplace policy must be strictly followed with exclusion from work if any symptoms develop, pending repeat PCR testing.

****** : The above refers to those in a primary role dedicated to outbreak unit (e.g., working the entire shift on same unit entering patient/resident room to complete their duties). Those who worked as a consultant or transiently on an outbreak unit, and are fully vaccinated (two doses minimum), may move between facilities and between units, on the condition they are asymptomatic, without following the above steps.

Appendix B: Resources listing outbreaks in Ontario regions

The following links are some of the resources that the public can access for identifying healthcare institutions undergoing outbreaks:

- Toronto Region: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-pandemic-data/covid-19-active-outbreaks-data/>
- Peel Region: <https://peelregion.ca/health-professionals/outbreaks/>