

COVID-19 Policy Directive for Developmental Services Sector on Shared Workers

April 7, 2020

This document is prepared by the Sector Pandemic Planning Initiative (SPPI) working groups which are comprised of subject matter experts across disciplines including health, legal, and developmental services. The policy directive provides recommended minimum standards to support the Development Services (DS) agencies who have shared workers who are employed by more than one organization. Each agency will want to assess interpretation and implementation of this directive relative to its own needs and counsel.

DS workers are identified as 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 residents and to protect themselves. As a sector, we are fully committed to the safety and wellbeing of the people we support and those who support them.

Many DS workers are employed by more than one organization across the sector. This complement of part-time/casual staff is vital to the human resources strategy within the sector and other organizations. As COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation, this guidance document and the recommendations should be considered in the context of any sector and agency-specific directives or conditions. ***This document is paired with an Ethics & Legal (E&L) Policy Brief which should also be reviewed.***

Guiding Principles

- DS workers are essential to the health and wellbeing of our individuals in care and our ability to manage and deliver services.
- Canada.ca's profile of the [most at risk populations for serious health implications from COVID-19](#) include characteristics which are experienced statistically more frequently by people who have developmental disabilities (e.g., chronic health conditions, unable to communicate, have supervision needs)
- DS workers provide an essential service that is critical to the successful management of the pandemic. We are committed fully to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our people.
- DS agencies need to understand that all DS workers have risk factors, including single work location staff. For example, if they may live with someone who works at multiple sites.
- Many DS workers currently provide service in more than one organization. Allowing them to maintain employment at more than one organization supports their financial

wellbeing and enables more flexible system deployment and response. However, DS workers who work at multiple organizations during the pandemic represent a unique group that require different considerations when they are working.

Recommendations

To help maintain the ability to deliver essential services across the Developmental Services Sector, it is recommended that organizations not restrict the use of DS workers from working for multiple organizations, provided they take additional precautionary steps, including:

- **Follow all appropriate Infection Prevention and Control practices and regulatory standards** to ensure a consistent approach to prevent and mitigate the risk of transmission. Be guided by Public Health Agency of Canada (federal), the Ministry of Health Long Term Care (provincial), and Public Health (regional).
- **Mandate all staff to disclose:**
 - Suspected, probable or confirmed exposure, according the [Emergency Order re: Developmental Services](#). This would include at any other workplace in the past 14 days, at home, or visiting a contact of theirs. This would also include visiting a high-risk site (e.g., taking a family member to hospital). (See the E&L Brief, page 5 Stage 1 section a)
- **Consider mandating all staff to disclose:**
 - If they are working elsewhere.
 - DS organizations may wish to proactively compile a staffing registry/staffing report to ascertain how many workers maintain employment at multiple sites and which , if there is a need to reassess and limit workers to one organization. (For more on this, including considerations, review the E&L Brief, Stage 1 sections b, d and l)
- **Consider updating any policies for staff** concerning disclosure requirements regarding other workplaces and the requirement to inform all employers/organizations concerning COVID-19 exposure. (See E&L Brief, page 8, section l for more).
- **Implement strict active screening protocols** for each group home or place of work to help prevent and mitigate the risk of transmission to others. Update regularly to be in line with all mandated disclosures and policies the agency puts in place. Provide clear instructions for employees and contract personnel on staff screening and sick leave reporting protocols. (See E&L Brief, pages 8 & 9, sections l and m)
- **Follow recommendations of Public Health authorities** concerning DS workers who provide service in a location experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak or a designated COVID-19 area within an organization. They should not be permitted to work

elsewhere until the outbreak is cleared, or at the direction of the local public health unit.

- **Alert other agencies of probable or confirmed exposure.** (See E&L Brief, page 8 section I).
- **Consider alternate risk mitigation strategies for all workers.** (See E&L Brief, page 10, Stage 3).

Individual organizations may choose to implement additional recommendations above and beyond these recommendations, as appropriate to their setting and situation.

References & Recommended Reading

1. Ontario Hospital Association (March 30, 2020). [COVID-19 Health Care Worker Multi-Employer Recommendations](#)
2. World Health Organization (March 25, 2020). [Operational Guidance for Maintaining Essential Health Services During an Outbreak](#)
3. Ministry of Health (March 20, 2020). [COVID-19 Guidance: Occupational Health and Safety and Infection Prevention & Control](#)
4. Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (January 1, 2018). [Institutional/Facility Outbreak Management Protocol, 2018](#)
5. Government of Ontario (April 3, 2020). Order in Council, Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, [Service agencies providing services and supports to adults with developmental disabilities](#)
6. Ministry of Health (April 1, 2020). [COVID-19 Guidance: Group Homes and Co-living Settings](#)