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MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 5, 2020

TO: **Ministry of Health Stakeholders**

RE: Access to the Provincial Pandemic Stockpile of PPE

I am writing to inform you about a recent policy change regarding access to the provincial pandemic stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE).

As Ontario recovers from the first wave of the pandemic, it is important to focus efforts on supporting the full re-opening of the health care sector across the province to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians. Ramping-up or re-starting in-person services and reducing the service backlog in a safe manner is of primary focus.

Sufficient and reliable supply of PPE is an important component of the safe re-restart of these services. The province recognizes the challenges that many providers have faced – including new sourcing complexities, inaccessible pricing, and lack of administrative resourcing required to support supply chain functionality. Organizations that did not have established PPE supply chains prior to the pandemic or whose supply chains failed have been particularly challenged.

The province is now in a position to expand the support we are providing to community-based health service providers and primary care providers. On a transitional basis, we will be supplying PPE from the provincial pandemic stockpile to meet their needs without the expectation that these providers first attempt to source PPE through their regular supply chain.

This memo provides an overview of the PPE from the provincial pandemic supply available to health care providers on a transitional basis, details on how eligible providers will be able to access this transitional support, as well as supporting FAQs.

Overview: Transitional PPE Support

Given current forecasts for the use and procurement of PPE, Ontario is now in a position to support health care providers to either ramp-up or re-open their services. As available, and at the discretion of the province, PPE will now be available to a larger group of health care providers to support this increase in service provision.

Additionally, the province will now support community-based providers by providing PPE from the provincial supply without first requiring them to attempt to secure their own PPE supply from the commercial market. This PPE will be provided at no-cost to eligible providers at the point of access. This policy will remain in effect as part of the province's pandemic response until the province determines otherwise.

Eligibility for Access

A full list of providers that qualify for transitional support is included in the attached FAQ document. In general, providers that qualify for this transitional support include:

- Primary Care Providers – broadened scope to include all providers, not just those serving vulnerable populations;
- Community-based Physician Specialists (e.g., ophthalmology, cardiology, pain clinics, respirology, neurology, endoscopy, etc.);
- Indigenous Communities and Indigenous Health Service Providers;
- Community Health Service Providers including:
 - Consumption and Treatment Services
 - Hospice Care
 - Community Mental Health and Addictions Agencies, including residential settings
 - Community Support Service Agencies
 - Non-Municipal seniors and supportive housing providers

Conditions of Access

Conservation & Appropriate Use

Although the availability of certain PPE has become more stable, adherence to best practices for PPE conservation and appropriate use remain critically important to our collective response to COVID-19. PPE is only one tool in the defence against COVID-19, and a range of conservation strategies (e.g., engineering, and administrative control actions) should also be implemented where possible. PPE will not be provided for patients, families or caregivers through this program. Prospective recipients of PPE from the province's pandemic supply must ensure their practices are in line with the PPE guidance available on conservation and appropriate use, as developed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health at http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx.

Reporting into the Virtual Inventory

Recipients of PPE from the province's pandemic supply are expected to report into the critical supplies and equipment (CSE) virtual inventory, as directed by Minister's Order for the health sector. Submission of information into the Ontario CSE inventory tool includes both inventory levels and consumption forecasts, to inform what organizations will use. Accurate and timely reporting into the virtual inventory provides the province with the information it needs to support its pandemic response and is required for participation in allocation. The How to Guide for the Ontario CSE Inventory Tool is attached, and training is available if required.

Process for Access

There is no change to the process for accessing PPE from the provincial pandemic stockpile. Distribution of PPE is led by Ontario Health. Providers should continue to make requests for PPE through the appropriate OH regional online intake form at <https://ehealthontario.on.ca/en/for-healthcare-professionals/digital-health-services>. Previously, the province has required all health care providers to attest that they have made efforts to secure their own PPE before turning to the provincial pandemic supply. Going forward, on a transitional basis, eligible providers will be able to request PPE from the province without having to take this step. Detailed instructions for eligible providers on how to use the online Remedy tool to make PPE requests are included in the attached guidance document.

For further information and guidance, providers should contact their OH regional PPE lead. Contact information is available in the enclosed FAQ document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mel Fraser', written over a faint, light-colored background.

Mel Fraser
Associate Deputy Minister, Health Services

Attachments:

- How to Complete Remedy Intake Form
- FAQs
- Health How to Guide for the Ontario CSE Inventory Tool