

SARS Bulletin for Healthcare Providers

Ministry of Health &
Long-Term Care

*A newsletter for
Healthcare Providers*

Issue no. 21, June 16, 2003

The government of Ontario is committed to providing the information healthcare providers require in order to deliver the services needed to manage SARS. As part of these ongoing communications, the government is issuing a SARS bulletin on a regular basis to inform healthcare professionals of new directives and other pertinent information.

This bulletin provides an update on new directives and communications and does not replace or amend these documents.

DIRECTIVES

- The following were issued today:
 - A revised screening tool
 - Directives for acute care facilities
 - Directives for high risk procedures in acute care facilities
- A directive to all health care facilities in central and eastern Ontario was issued on June 13th
- A communiqué was issued on June 13th and, in addition to all health care workers, it will be of interest to out-patient units and independent health care facilities
- Please contact your facility/college/association administrator to obtain these documents

KEY INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The following SARS assessment clinics are open:

- **General site of The Scarborough Hospital**
3050 Lawrence Avenue, Toronto
Please proceed directly to the portables near the emergency room entrance.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. seven days a week.
- **Oshawa site of Lakeridge Health Corporation**
1 Hospital Court, Oshawa
Please proceed to the emergency room.
Hours: 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. seven days a week.
- **North York General Hospital**
4001 Leslie Street, Toronto
Please proceed to emergency department's ambulance bay.
Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. seven days a week

KEY SARS FACTS

- There are currently 44 active probable cases in hospital, a 26% decline in the past four days.
- 294 people have been discharged to date.
- GTA hospitals are advised to continue heightened infection control procedures and to follow mask fit testing procedures.
- A communiqué that, in part, details matters for free-standing out-patient units and independent health facilities was posted on June 13th

CUMULATIVE CASE STATUS

(As of June 16th, 2003)

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Probable | 243 |
| Suspect | 133 |
| Cumulative total | 376 |
| Total active cases | 48 |
| Discharged | 294 |
| Deaths | 33 |

NEWS

- Although the World Health Organization has upgraded Toronto to a category 'C' region (indicating that recent local transmission has occurred), it has not issued a travel advisory for Toronto at this time.
- The World Health Organization's international conference on SARS starts tomorrow in Kuala Lumpur. The first session is an overview of what is currently known about the clinical behaviour of SARS, its causative agent, modes of transmission, the effectiveness of control measures, and possible origins in an animal species. The WHO indicates that debate is expected to centre on some of the disease's many mysteries, including reasons for the rapid deterioration of some patients and spontaneous recovery of others, the comparatively mild form of illness seen in children, and the contribution of certain source cases to especially rapid spread of infection. Other unresolved issues include the possibility of an animal reservoir, and the

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significance of environmental sources of infection, as experienced during the outbreaks at the Metropole Hotel and in the Amoy Gardens housing estate. The second day of the conference consists of working sessions that are expected to answer questions important in the ongoing response to SARS and in gauging preparedness for other epidemic-prone diseases. Questions include the effectiveness of current control measures and the adequacy of the public health infrastructure for outbreak alert and response. These working sessions will also consider technical constraints that may make it impossible to eliminate SARS.

- The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued an update on the SARS situation in Toronto, which includes a number of proposals and infection control recommendations. This document may be accessed online at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5223a4.htm>
- The government of Hong Kong and the World Health Organization held a SARS clinical management workshop on June 13 and 14. The focus of this workshop was threefold: clinical presentation and progression of the disease, treatment modalities and nosocomial infection and infection control. The conference organizers expect to publish a consensus document on SARS clinical management, based on the conference deliberations, and to table it at the World Health Organization's Global Conference on SARS.

AFFECTED SITES

The following are current exposure sites (where transmission has occurred).

- University Health Network Toronto General Hospital (Emergency room) – May 26
- North York General Hospital General Division – May 22 – May 23

To access our list of current potential exposure sites (where there has been no known transmission) please visit our web site at:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca>

- The World Health Organization has posted a list of areas with recent local transmission. This is available online at
<http://www.who.int/csr/sars/areas/>

COMMUNICATIONS

- Press conferences with the Commissioners of Public Health and Public Security as well as other medical experts continue to be held as needed. Updates and fact sheets will be posted at
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca>

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Potential SARS exposure hotline (recorded message) 1-866-670-3155
- Websites www.health.gov.on.ca, www.healthyontario.com
- SARS operations centre 1-866-212-2272
- Toronto Public Health 416-338-7600
- York Region Health Services Health Connection 1-800-361-5653
- Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000
- SARS hotline - for public general SARS information 1-888-668-4636

USEFUL NON-MINISTRY LINKS

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention SARS website
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>
- World Health Organization SARS website
<http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/index.html>
- Health Canada SARS website for health care professionals and the public <http://sars.gc.ca>