



## SARS Provincial Operations Centre

Directive 03-02(R)  
April 11, 2003

### DIRECTIVES TO ALL ONTARIO ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS CONCERNING DISCHARGE OF NON-SARS PATIENTS

*This Directive replaces the following:*

*Directive to all Ontario Acute Care Hospitals, Disposition of Discharged Patients*  
*(Directive 03-02 dated April 8, 2003)*

The manner in which patients are discharged from hospital to home or non-acute care facilities across the province is dependent on the hospital category.

In order to contain the spread of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care advises that all Ontario hospitals must undertake the following procedures **effective immediately**:

#### **For inpatients who are non-SARS patients**

**1. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 0 or 1 hospitals:**

Patients will be discharged from Category 0 or 1 hospitals following usual routines.

**2. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 2 hospitals:**

The hospital will perform the SARS Screening Tool prior to discharge.

Patients who pass the screening tool will be discharged. These patients do not require quarantine, but they should self-monitor (or caregiver should monitor) for symptoms for the next 10 days. If symptoms develop, the patient or caregiver should contact Public Health. Patients who fail the screening tool will be assessed medically by the hospital. If after medical assessment SARS is not suspected, the patient is discharged with instructions to monitor for symptoms for the next 10 days. **Please note for discharge to non-acute care facilities, hospitals must consult with Public Health as to the suitability of the discharge.**

If SARS is suspected, the hospital will not discharge the patient and will contact Public Health and hospital Infection Control.

**3. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 3 hospitals:**

The hospital will perform the SARS Screening Tool prior to discharge.

Patients who pass the screening tool will be discharged under quarantine for the next 10 days. Because the patient is in quarantine, patients will be discharged wearing a surgical mask via ambulance or medical transportation service or via private vehicle if unaccompanied. The patient should self-monitor (or caregiver should monitor) for symptoms for the next 10 days and if symptoms develop notify Public Health. Patients who fail the screening tool will be assessed medically by the hospital. If after medical assessment SARS is not suspected, the hospital will discharge the patient in the same manner as those patients who passed the screening tool. **Please note for discharge to non-acute care facilities, hospitals must consult with Public Health as to the suitability of the discharge.**

Hospitals will fax notification of all patient discharges to Public Health on a daily basis.

If SARS is suspected, the hospital will not discharge the patient and will contact hospital Infection Control and the local Public Health Unit.

**For Emergency Department patients, patients entering a facility for diagnostic tests or outpatients**

**1. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 0 or 1 hospitals:**

Patients will be discharged from Category 0 or 1 hospitals following usual routines.

Outpatients and patients receiving diagnostic tests may complete their visit and be discharged with no special precautions provided that they had passed the SARS Screening Tool upon entering the hospital

Patients who had failed the screening tool upon entry will be assessed medically by the hospital. If after medical assessment SARS is not suspected the patient may complete their visit and the hospital will discharge the patient with no further special precautions (in the same manner as those patients who passed the screening tool).

Emergency Department patients may be discharged with no special precautions if they passed the SARS Screening Tool upon entering the hospital.

## **2. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 2 hospitals:**

Outpatients and patients receiving diagnostic tests may complete their visit and may be discharged with no special precautions provided that they had passed the SARS Screening Tool upon entering the hospital

Emergency Department patients may be discharged with no special precautions if they passed the SARS Screening Tool upon entering the hospital and if they have been in the Emergency Department for 24 hours or less.

If Emergency Department patients have stayed longer than 24 hours, they should be screened using the SARS Screening Tool prior to discharge. Patients who pass the screening tool will be discharged. These patients do not require quarantine, but they should self-monitor (or caregiver should monitor) for symptoms for the next 10 days. If symptoms develop, the patient or caregiver should contact Public Health. Patients who fail the screening tool will be assessed medically by the hospital. If after medical assessment SARS is not suspected, the patient is discharged with instructions to monitor for symptoms for the next 10 days. **Please note for discharge to non-acute care facilities, hospitals must consult with Public Health as to the suitability of the discharge.**

If SARS is suspected, the hospital will not discharge the patient and will contact Public Health and hospital Infection Control.

## **3. Patients discharged home or to a non-acute care facility from Category 3 hospitals:**

The hospital will perform the SARS Screening Tool prior to discharge for all Emergency Department patients and patients receiving emergency diagnostic tests or essential treatments (e.g. renal dialysis).

Patients who pass the screening tool will be discharged under quarantine for the next 10 days. Because the patient is in quarantine, patients will be discharged wearing a surgical mask via ambulance or medical transportation service or via private vehicle

if unaccompanied. The patient should self-monitor (or caregiver should monitor) for symptoms for the next 10 days and if symptoms develop notify Public Health.

**Please note for discharge to non-acute care facilities, hospitals must consult with Public Health as to the suitability of the discharge.**

Patients who fail the screening tool will be assessed medically by the hospital. If after medical assessment SARS is not suspected, the hospital will discharge the patient in the same manner as those patients who passed the screening tool.

Hospitals will fax notification of all patient discharges to Public Health on a daily basis.

If SARS is suspected, the hospital will not discharge the patient and will contact hospital Infection Control and the local Public Health Unit.

*Original signed by  
Dr. James G. Young*

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Dr. James G. Young  
Commissioner of  
Public Security

*Original signed by  
Dr. Colin D’Cunha*

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Dr. Colin D’Cunha  
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