

SARS Bulletin for Healthcare Providers

Ministry of Health &
Long-Term Care

*A newsletter for
Healthcare Providers*

Issue no. 16, May 30, 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 will be 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

- No new Directives have been released today.
- Please contact your facility administrator and college or association to obtain copies of all directives.

KEY INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

- Healthcare providers are directed to the May 2nd communication on mask testing services, available at the dedicated SARS website.

NEWS

- On May 29, Health Canada announced that Canada is aligning its clinical description of symptoms and signs of SARS with that of the WHO. Health Canada states that they are moving from a definition of “severe progressive respiratory illness suggestive of atypical pneumonia or acute respiratory syndrome (RDS) with no known cause” to “radiographic evidence in infiltrates consistent with pneumonia or respiratory distress syndrome on chest x-ray with no known cause that can fully explain the illness.”
- The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has made two documents from the *Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal* available online pertaining to clinical features of SARS in Singapore and Taiwan. “Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Singapore: Clinical Features of Index Patient and Initial Contacts” and “Control Measures for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Taiwan” may be downloaded at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/training.htm>

KEY SARS FACTS

- There are 38 probable and 13 suspect cases related to the new cluster (reported on or after May 22nd). These numbers are based on the WHO case definition.
 - Durham, Parry Sound, York and Toronto have reported probable cases.
 - Durham, Toronto and York have reported suspect cases.
- St. Michael’s Hospital reports an additional potential exposure point: neurotrauma ICU between May 19 and 24.
- GTA hospitals are advised to continue heightened infection control procedures and to follow mask fit testing procedures.
- There is no evidence of widespread public transmission of SARS and the current cases under investigation are linked to the original cluster of cases.

CUMULATIVE CASE STATUS

(As of May 30, 2003)

Probable	184
Suspect	134
Cumulative total	318
Total current cases	56
Discharged	232
Deaths	30

AFFECTED SITES

- North York General Hospital – April 19- May 23
- St. John's Rehabilitation Hospital – May 1 – May 22
- Scarborough Hospital, General Division – May 12 – May 23
- UHN Toronto General Hospital ED – May 22
- St. Michael's Hospital, Neurosurgery Unit – May 15-May 23
- St. Michael's Hospital, CCU – May 20 – 25
- Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care – May 21-23
- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute – May 22-23
- Lakeridge Healthcare Corporation Bowmanville Hospital – May 24
- West Parry Sound Health Centre – May 23
- St. Michael's Hospital reports the following additional potential exposure period: neurotrauma ICU (9th floor Cardinal Carter wing) May 19-24
- 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/2003_05_29/en/

COMMUNICATIONS

- Press conferences with the Commissioner of Public Health and other medical experts continue to be held as needed. Updates and fact sheets will be posted at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>
- MOHLTC will place additional SARS information advertising in Toronto dailies and relevant community weeklies May 31st and June 2nd.

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
- Public - 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>

