

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 20, 2021

TO: Long-term Care and Assisted Living Managers and Directors of Care

FROM: Carmela Veza, Acting Director Long-term Care
Emily Pridham, Interim COVID Director
Lisa Young, Director Infection Prevention and Control
Evan McKay, Prevention Advisor Occupational Health and Safety

RE: Eye/Facial Protection in Long-term Care and Assisted Living

A number of changes have occurred over the past few weeks. We have seen an increase in COVID-19 cases reported on Vancouver Island, including those identified as Variants of Concern. At the same time, we have introduced the BC CDC [Visitor Guidance for Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#), which has created a significant increase in visitors to our sites.

The ongoing safety of both our staff and residents remains a priority. In Long-term Care (LTC) and Assisted Living (AL) we have a number of measures and infection control practices in place such as:

- High vaccination rates amongst staff and residents with preparation for second dose clinics underway
- Active entrance screening of all visitors and twice daily screening of our LTC residents as an early detection system of potential illness
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements
 - wear a medical-grade mask at all times (unless eating or drinking when you will be 2-metres apart from others)
 - LTC staff wear eye protection according to their [point of care risk assessment](#) (PCRA)
 - CHS staff wear eye protection in AL when they are within 2 metres of residents
 - practice excellent hand hygiene, and
 - maintaining physical distance from colleagues when able

There have been questions about the difference for when eye protection is worn in LTC and AL as opposed to other healthcare areas. As the majority of the population in LTC and AL is vaccinated and stable, experience suggests that staff and providers can do a PCRA to identify when eye protection must be worn. However, it has become clear that the availability of eye protection at the point of care and performing PCRA assessment are challenges.

Therefore, Island Health Assisted Living and Long-term Care programs, Infection Prevention and Control, and Occupational Health and Safety are now requiring that all staff and providers wear eye protection when within 2 metres of a resident or visitor.

It is important that all staff and providers use the PPE and eye protection provided *by* their place of work, *at* that place of work. Please refer to the [Island Health PPE Storage & Ordering Guide](#) and the [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#).

For more information, please refer to the [Eye Protection FAQ](#).
