OBJECTIVES

- To provide direction for operational leaders and health care professionals for the initial screening of all inpatients and outpatients ("all patients") for respiratory communicable diseases (including influenza-like illness [ILI]), travel, and COVID-19 exposure risk.

- To provide direction for operational leaders and health care professionals for ongoing COVID-19 symptom assessment and monitoring for inpatients.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. Points of Emphasis

   1.1 All patients shall be screened at the time of presentation for respiratory communicable diseases, travel, and COVID-19 exposure in order to quickly identify those who require additional precautions (droplet, airborne, contact and droplet, or contact and airborne) using the Inpatient, Emergency and Urgent Care Communicable Disease (Respiratory) Screening Form or Ambulatory Care Communicable (Respiratory) Disease Screening Form as appropriate. For patients attending Laboratory or Diagnostic Services appointments (other than Interventional Radiology) site entrance screening is sufficient.
a) This Directive is not intended for use in neonates, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

b) Initial screening (i.e., symptom and risk factor assessment) in acute care is essential, particularly for admissions that bypass the Emergency Department, or when screening has not otherwise been previously completed and documented.

1.2 Health care professionals shall monitor inpatients on an ongoing basis using a standard set of COVID-19 symptoms to evaluate the patient’s condition as per Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) standards.

2. Communicable Disease (Respiratory) Initial Screening for All Patients

2.1 AHS has incorporated screening for respiratory communicable diseases into most clinical information systems and some paper-based processes.

2.2 Patients who have not been screened for respiratory communicable diseases as part of the admission process shall be screened by a health care professional as soon as possible upon arrival to the inpatient unit or admitting unit, using the AHS Inpatient, Emergency and Urgent Care Communicable Disease (Respiratory) Screening Form.

a) If the patient has COVID-19 core respiratory or gastrointestinal symptom(s), contact and droplet precautions are to be initiated by the health care professional and the Charge Nurse and most responsible health practitioner (MRHP) should be notified.

3. Ongoing Inpatient COVID-19 Symptom Assessment and Monitoring Documentation

3.1 The health care professional shall use the AHS COVID-19 Inpatient Symptom Identification and Monitoring Form (paper or electronic) for all inpatients at a minimum of twice (2) daily (e.g., every 12 hours) for the duration of the admission.

a) The form shall be kept on the patient’s chart and is intended for multidisciplinary use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Additional symptom details and/or actions taken in response to ILI that are not included on the form shall be documented in the patient’s chart and not on the AHS COVID-19 Inpatient Symptom Identification and Monitoring Form.

3.3 If the patient is on contact and droplet precautions and has improved or resolved COVID-19 symptoms for at least 48 hours, refer to the AHS Discontinuation of Contact and Droplet Precautions for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Form Consult IPC as needed; however, symptom monitoring should be continued at a minimum of twice (2) daily for the duration of the admission (see Section 3.1).
DEFINITIONS

Health care professional means an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline, as defined by the Health Professions Act (Alberta), and who practises within scope and role.

Most responsible health practitioner (MRHP) means the health practitioner who has responsibility and accountability for the specific treatment/procedure(s) provided to a patient and who is authorized by AHS to perform the duties required to fulfill the delivery of such a treatment/procedure(s) within the scope of their practice.

Patient means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Forms:
  - Inpatient, Emergency and Urgent Care Communicable Disease (Respiratory) Screening Form (#21615)
  - Ambulatory Care Communicable (Respiratory) Disease Screening Form (#21666)
  - COVID-19 Inpatient Symptom Identification and Monitoring Form (#21616)
  - Discontinuation of Contact and Droplet Precautions for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Form (#21624)

- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - Interim IPC Recommendations During COVID-19

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