



HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 3.21

DEPARTMENT: *Administration – H&S Emergency Preparedness*

SUBJECT: Outbreaks, Epidemics & Pandemics

APPROVAL DATE: July 2022

REVISION DATE: October 2022; Dec. 2023

REVIEW DATE: Dec. 2024

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PURPOSE:

The Homes will utilize a site-specific outbreak, epidemic and pandemic plan to support leaders to ensure safety and mitigate risk in the context of an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic.

Outbreak, epidemic and pandemic plans will be implemented and used in the context with other organizational policy and procedure manuals, including Infection Prevention and Control.

POLICY:

The Home will be prepared to respond in the event of an outbreak, epidemic, and/or pandemic, including outbreaks of a communicable disease and outbreaks of a disease of public health significance. The Homes will reference tools and direction provided by Southwestern Public Health. It is noted that in the event of a pandemic, information and requirements may change rapidly as the situation evolves. Provincial mandates will supersede local practice as the highest authority where applicable.

DEFINITIONS:

Outbreak: An outbreak is a sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease and it carries the same definition of epidemic, but is often used for a more limited geographic area.

Endemic: the usual incidence of a given disease within a geographical area during a specified time period.

Epidemic: an excess over the expected incidence of disease within a given geographical area during a specified time period. If the expected number of cases of a disease in a province is 8 per year, and 16 occur in 1 year, this indicates an epidemic. It should be noted that an epidemic is not defined on the absolute number of cases but on the number of cases in comparison to what is expected.

Pandemic: an epidemic spread over a wide geographical area, across countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people. It differs from an outbreak or epidemic because it:

- affects a wider geographical area, often worldwide.



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- is often caused by a new virus or a strain of virus that has not circulated among people for a long time. Humans usually have little to no immunity against it. The virus spreads quickly from person-to-person worldwide.
- causes much higher numbers of deaths than epidemics.
- often creates social disruption, economic loss, and general hardship.

PROCEDURE:

The Director of Homes & Seniors Services/Designate will, in collaboration with the Management team (including IPAC Program Manager):

- 1) Reference the Infection Prevention & Control manual for detailed outbreak preparation and response requirements.
- 2) Ensure, where possible, an area(s) of the Home is identified to be used for isolating residents as required, e.g. Adult Day Program room, private rooms, etc.
- 3) Ensure a process is in place to divide both team members and residents into cohorts as required.
- 4) Ensure staffing contingency plans are in place and kept current – see Administration Policy 1.33 Staffing Plan and 1.36 Operational Scheduling Cohorting Plan.
- 5) Ensure annual practice/testing of outbreak and pandemic preparedness, inclusive of any arrangements with external entities who may be involved in or provide emergency services in the area where the care community/residence is located (including, without being limited to, health service providers, partner facilities and resources that will be involved in responding to the emergency).

The Infection Prevention & Control Program Manager or designate will:

- 1) Participate in developing, updating, evaluating, testing, and reviewing the Home's emergency plans as related to outbreaks of a communicable disease, outbreaks of a disease of public health significance, epidemics and pandemics
- 2) Involve the Medical Director (as applicable) and Southwestern Public Health in the development and annual review of the Home's emergency plans as related to outbreaks of a communicable disease, outbreaks of a disease of public health significance, epidemics and pandemics.



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Ensure a process is in place for inspection of outbreak/epidemic/pandemic supplies for functionality, expired dates, and restocking as needed.

References:

Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health Practice, Third Edition: An Introduction to Applied Epidemiology and Biostatistics: <https://www.cdc.gov/csels/dsepd/ss1978/lesson1/section11.html>

Corporation of the County of Elgin COVID-19 Safety Plan, December 21, 2021, v. 5

Administration Policy 3.22 Pandemic Plan

Administration Policy 1.33 Staffing Plan

Administration Policy 1.36 Operational Scheduling and Cohorting Plan

Administration Policy 1.35 Visitors and Absences During a Pandemic

Elgin County Homes and Seniors Services Infection Prevention & Control Manual

Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021

ON Reg. 246/22

Health Protection and Promotion Act: [ON REG. 135/18](#)