AHS has changed some of their directives around how people who are COVID positive or close contacts and the ability to be coming to clinical placements.

This is the directive:

**Attending work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact**

AHS has updated the Attending work with COVID-19 symptoms, positive test, or close contact directive to align with public health measures announced on Dec. 31, which came into effect on Jan. 3. These changes are necessary to balance the protection of our people and patients from the highly transmissible Omicron variant, as well as to ensure we have the staffing necessary to maintain critical services.

**Key changes to the directive include:**

- **Shorter work restriction period for fully immunized healthcare workers who test positive for COVID-19.** This means fully immunized workers can return to work after day 5 as long as symptoms are improving and you’ve been without fever for 24 hours.

- **New guidance for healthcare workers who are close contacts:**
  - Introduction of 10 days of rapid testing for close contacts who are fully immunized (note, this differs from the temporary frequent testing option under the Immunization or Testing of Workers for COVID-19 Policy).
  - Fully immunized workers with a booster dose can remain at work if they are a close contact, without any testing requirement, as long as it has been at least 14 days since the booster dose.
  - Workers who are not fully immunized will be restricted from work for 14 days if they become a close contact.

First, please ensure that you follow the rules about when you can come back to work after a COVID diagnosis.

Second (and a bigger change) is the requirement for rapid testing for 10 days for anyone who is a close contact (for individuals who are ‘fully vaccinated’ but without a booster). My understanding is that AHS is providing workers with rapid tests as required for this. I am contacting AHS Zone leadership today to find out if students are eligible to receive these kits as well (and if so, how to obtain them). I will follow up as soon as I have further information on this. For the time being, anyone in this situation will need to use their own testing at home.

Outbreak units at FMC are still off limits for learners. This now includes three units: 54, 62, 72. You may not be working on these units.

As above, I will email with further information about accessing rapid tests.

**Definitions of close contacts are here:** [https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/page17221.aspx](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/page17221.aspx). Simple masks do not eliminate you from being a close contact, unfortunately.

However, given the current guidance, which I sent in an email last week, if you are working in a clinical environment with patients who are COVID proven/probable/possible — you should be wearing an N95 and full PPE. This will keep you from being a ‘close contact’ in this regard.

It's a lot of info coming in with almost daily changes — I’ll try to stay on top of it and keep you informed as best I can.

Take care
KB
Kevin Busche MD BSc FRCPC
Associate Professor
Department of Clinical Neurosciences