

Memo

Date:
March 24, 2023

To: Health system partners

From: Anna Greenberg, Chief Regional Officer, Toronto and East
Susan deRyk, Chief Regional Officer, Central and West
Brian Kytzor, Chief Regional Officer, North East and North West

CC Dr. Sacha Bhatia, Senior Vice President, Population Health and Value-Based Health Systems, Ontario Health
Michele Henry, Senior Director, Laboratory Network Operations, Ontario Health

Re: Ontario's assessment centres and clinical assessment centres

Ontario's assessment centre (ACs) played a pivotal role in Ontario's pandemic response by providing COVID-19 testing to people across the province. In addition, Ontario's clinical assessment centres (CACs) ramped up quickly to provide assessments and treatment for COVID-19 to people across the province. These efforts were a significant part of our COVID-19 response, and we extend our thanks to the health care providers, administrators, and staff who supported this work.

With the lower rates of COVID-19 and current testing guidance, pharmacies are well positioned to support the publicly funded PCR testing demand. In addition, rapid antigen tests continue to be available at no cost through more than 3,000 retailers across the province. As a result, we will be winding down most ACs by June 30, 2023. A small number of sites in communities where access to testing is otherwise limited will maintain operations and work with their Ontario Health regions on long-term planning. These sites will be listed on the COVID-19 testing locations website (<https://www.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations>).

Similarly, because we have seen a reduction in demand for services at most CACs, we are able to begin winding down these centres to ensure we are focusing resources on delivering services where they are most needed, by allowing health-care professionals, including doctors and nurses, to return to their regular roles in the health system.

It is our expectation that CACs will be able to complete their wind down and transition by June 30, 2023. We recognize that there may be unique circumstances, specifically for centres helping to fill critical gaps in care. In these exceptional circumstances, limited funding or additional time may be considered. In these circumstances, CACs will work with their Ontario Health regional team to plan for transition.

We ask that you adjust your workflow to account for the upcoming wind down plans. If a patient needs a COVID-19 test, assessment, or treatment and you cannot provide it, you can direct them to:

- contact their pharmacy or [locate the nearest pharmacy that provides COVID-19 testing](#)
- contact their primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner)
- call 811 or visit [ontario.ca/health811](https://www.ontario.ca/health811) for more information about testing, assessment and treatment

- consult <https://www.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations> for an open assessment centre near you

Again, we want to thank everyone who has supported Ontario's ACs and CACs. Your willingness to adapt and build new pathways to meet the needs of your community has been inspiring. The AC and CAC model has been very successful and we are well positioned to revisit their future use should they be needed to help respond to future respiratory illness seasons.

Please reach out to your Ontario Health regional team (see [Appendix A](#)) should you have any questions or concerns.

Appendix A. Ontario Health regional contacts

Central	Mira Backo-Shannon (Mira.Backo-Shannon@ontariohealth.ca) David Pearson (David.Pearson@ontariohealth.ca)
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