

Weekly Q/A on COVID-19: For Alberta's disability sector

What is the availability of Government of Alberta managed space for use as an isolation environment if this is needed by the PDD service provider sector?

The best solution for any Albertan who is exposed to COVID-19 or becomes infected with the COVID-19 virus is to isolate where they live and this includes Albertans with developmental disabilities who live in PDD group homes.

In some cases isolating at home may not be possible for PDD group home residents because of a lack of staffing supports. In cases like this, service providers can contact their PDD regional office for support and information regarding how to access COVID-19 isolation spaces managed through the Alberta Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT).

What type of support is available through the Ministry to obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Service providers are encouraged to submit information regarding their specific needs and questions on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to: PESSECC-LOGISTICS@gov.ab.ca.

A process is being finalized for Families with PDD Family Managed Service (FMS) agreements and families accessing supports through the Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program to access masks they may need for workers coming into their homes. The process will be shared shortly.

The recent CMOH directives included seniors lodging and homes under the *Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act (SLALA)*. Would they also include Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) homes?

The *Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act (SLALA)* applies to licensed PDD group homes with four or more residents.

Many PDD group homes do not fall under SLALA but all disability service providers that manage PDD group homes for adults with developmental disabilities – regardless of the number of residents – are encouraged to follow COVID-19 health protocols as these are put in place to help support the safety of group home residents and staff.

Given there are some PDD group home and support service staff shortages due to COVID-19, some service providers have implemented wage increases (in line with other organizations such as grocery stores) to incent staff to stay on the job or to attract new staff. How will the Ministry view these decisions?

Service providers need to work collaboratively with regional Community and Social Service (CSS) PDD staff to strive to operate within their contract amounts.

CSS PDD staff have been instructed to be as flexible as possible to best support PDD service delivery during the pandemic and the existing PPD contract template provides for some flexibility to reallocate some funds to support timely decisions that help service providers respond to their organizational needs.

CSS is finalizing details related to PDD contract invoicing practices to provide greater flexibility for service providers to address COVID-related expenses and pressures. We will provide details to service providers shortly.

The Ministry and Service providers have a shared responsibility to ensure that all staff and clients are safe and following the health protocols as Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Health Orders are legally binding and must be followed.

Are there other provincial and federal initiatives that will be available to support disability service providers as they manage their response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The provincial government and the federal government have developed a variety of mechanisms and programs to help organizations and individuals manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provincial COVID-19 webpage at www.alberta.ca and the [Government of Canada website](#) have the latest updates on what provincial and federal supports may be available.

Are contracted service providers eligible for the federal wage subsidy?

Specific eligibility criteria for federal financial support programs related to the COVID-19 pandemic and information on the Federal Government's overall response to the Pandemic can be found [on their website](#).

What can disability service providers do if a group home resident becomes infected with COVID-19 and refuses to cooperate with self-isolation?

If you have questions or concerns about the safety and security of your group home staff and residents please speak with your regional PDD office and reach out to your local Alberta Health Services (AHS) office.

You can also call '811'.