

Infection Prevention and Control challenges in Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes during COVID-19 Pandemic in Ontario, Canada

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Objectives

This presentation aims to:

1. Describe the IPAC needs and barriers identified by Public Health Ontario (PHO) through observations from Long-term Care (LTC) & Retirement Home (RH) Visits during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Inform future IPAC supports for the long-term care sector

PHO Supportive Visits to Ontario LTC and RHs

- Between April 21, 2020 and June 16, 2021, Public Health Ontario IPAC Specialists in collaboration with local Public Health Units (PHU) conducted 139 on-site and 33 virtual visits in LTC/RH
- 64 LTC/RH were in outbreak and 3 had recently resolved outbreaks
- LTC/RHs were prioritized for assessments based on pre-visit questionnaires completed in cooperation with local PHUs

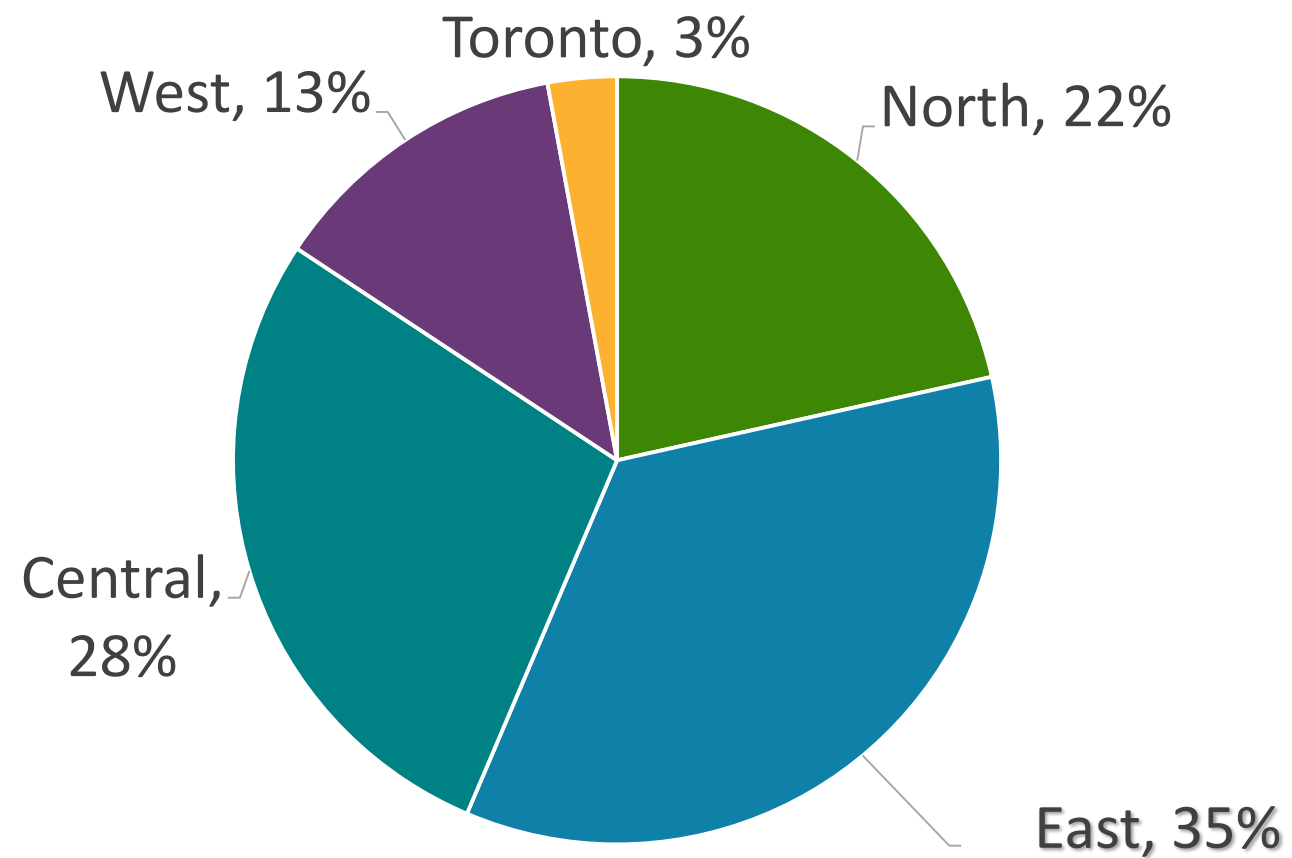
PHO Supportive Visits to Ontario LTC and RHs (continued)

- Assessments facilitated by a tool developed by PHO
- Following the assessments, a report with findings and recommendations were shared with the Health Unit and LTCH/RH
- A thematic analysis of the reports found common challenges in several areas

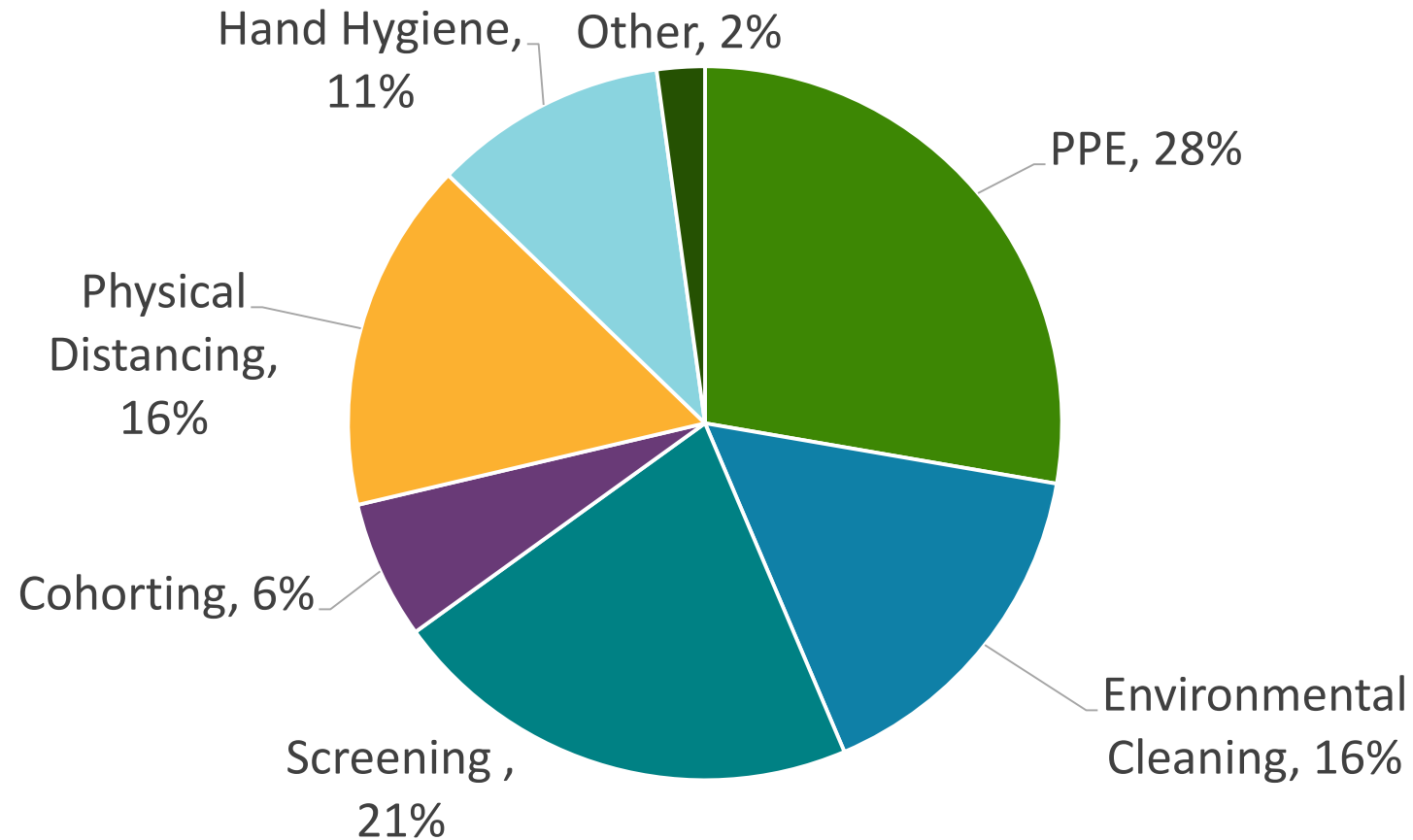


What is the Data Telling Us?

LTC/RH Visits by Provincial Region



Frequency of Recommendations in LTC/RH





PPE

PPE -Common Themes

- Inappropriate glove and gown use
- PPE reuse
- Gaps in masking - inappropriate use and lack of supplies

PPE (continued)

- Stakeholders requested specific information on:
 - Masking requirements/exemptions
 - Mask and respirator use
 - Evidence of layering multiple masks (i.e., doubling masks)
 - Eye protection and face shields (help with product selection, disinfecting protocols and when to use)
 - General donning and doffing protocols for PPE
 - PPE needs based on staff role (e.g., staff delivering meals)
 - Required PPE for AGMPs



Screening

Screening -Common Themes

- Improper screening area set up
- No formal screening process
- Inappropriate screener PPE use
- Incorrect screening questions asked at entrance
- Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) and disinfectant wipes not available at the screening area



Physical Distancing

Physical Distancing -Common Themes

- Challenges were identified with how to set up physical distancing in common areas, activity rooms and dining rooms
- Challenges were identified with how to set up physical distancing for staff on break or lunches or during team meetings



Environmental Cleaning (EC)

Environmental Cleaning – Common Themes

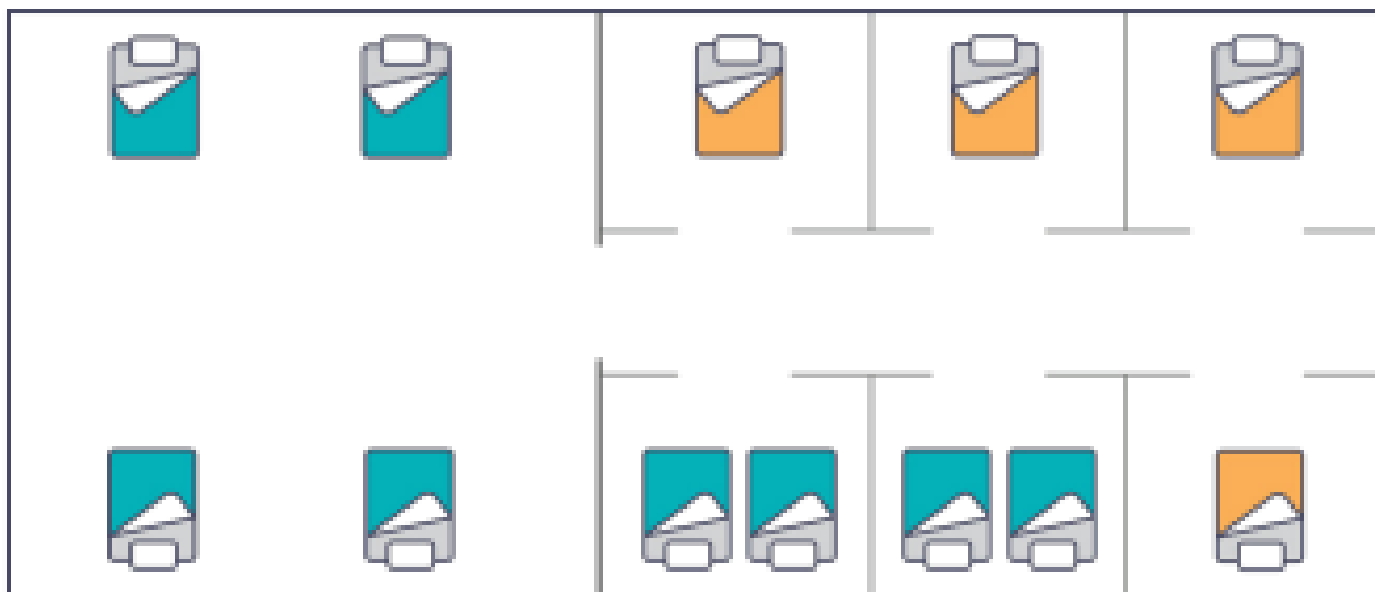
- No auditing process
- Incorrect use and selection of wipes and cleaning products
- Undefined process for cleaning high touch surfaces
- Insufficient staff and training: other non-environmental services staff (e.g. maintenance) were assigned to environmental cleaning to meet enhanced needs but did not receive necessary training
- Deficient cleaning of shared equipment
- Uncertainty around cleaning during outbreaks



Hand Hygiene

Hand Hygiene – Common Themes

- ABHR not available or insufficient alcohol concentration
- Lack of hand hygiene auditing
- Excessive glove use and improper hand hygiene
- Improper Hand Hygiene Technique
- Need for support with the audit tool/calculations
- Request for training (online modules, videos) and print materials



Cohorting

Cohorting – Identified Issues

- Lack of available staff for homes to follow cohorting guidelines
- Not understanding how to cohort
- Room cleaning delays
- Improper allocation of staff and flow for resident care



Future Considerations

Future Considerations - Education and Training

- Selecting hospital grade cleaner/disinfectant with a Drug Identification Number (DIN)
- Disinfectant concentrations, proper application of cleaning products and contact time
- Defined processes for cleaning high touch surfaces and tracking when cleaning occurred
- Choosing the correct PPE following point of care risk assessments (PCRA)
- Donning and doffing PPE, including on the spot PPE training and well as facility-wide auditing
- Accessing updated Ministry Guidance

Future Considerations –Implementation Support

- Development of an Environmental cleaning (EC) process tracking system
- Regular review of EC processes including on the spot EC training
- Homes may benefit from assistance in monitoring or auditing hand hygiene compliance
- Including training for facility wide hand hygiene auditing in this process

Future Considerations -Tailoring Strategies/Resources

- Practicing physical distancing with residents and staff
- Providing care to cohorts
- Balancing ethics and IPAC
- Translating resources into multiple languages
- Collaborating with BIPOC partners
- On-site support, coaching/mentorship

Opportunities to Improve IPAC Knowledge/Effectiveness

- Community of Practices (CoPs) specific to LTC/Novice ICPs
- Interactive and engaging education
- Supporting and developing strong IPAC Champions
- Support and collaboration from IPAC specialist
- Consistent guidance and recommendations

Positive Approaches to Building & Enhancing IPAC Culture

- Building trusting relationships with all stakeholders
- Good communication
- Understanding and awareness of barriers
- Being flexible and innovative
- Collaboration

For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:

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