

BULLETIN

## New province-wide policy provides greater protection for health care workers

November 6, 2020

The Ministry of Health has released an updated policy concerning the wearing of masks by workers, patients, and visitors in all health care facilities, programs, and services. The policy applies to all facilities and settings where health care services are provided, including outpatient clinics, as well as long term care and seniors assisted living facilities.

HSA members began to raise concerns as soon as the COVID pandemic emerged early this year.

Under the new policy, every individual, including patients and visitors, attending a health care facility and in all settings where health care is provided is required to wear a mask. The policy also includes a requirement for all visitors, but not patients, to wear masks in long term care and seniors in assisted living facilities. In addition, all persons working in a Long-Term Care facility or Seniors Assisted Living residence must wear a medical mask at all times, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.

Since March, HSA and other health care unions have raised the issue and pushed for province-wide policies with the Ministry of Health, WorkSafe BC, and employers, and is pleased that the concerted advocacy has finally resulted in a comprehensive and consistent policy that enhances protection for all members of the health care team, patients, clients, and families.

All the health authorities have received the policy, and have directions from the Ministry of Health to implement it as soon as possible.

**A copy of the policy can be found [here](#).**

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