

IPAC Annual Consultation Requirement Clarification Q&As

Overview

The Ministry has clarified that the annual consultation requirement must be fulfilled with the local Medical Officer of Health or a designated individual. Retirement homes should contact their local public health unit to confirm who they should consult with and obtain written confirmation where possible. IPAC Hubs may only fulfill this requirement if they have been designated by the Medical Officer of Health.

Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the Ministry clarifying in this memo?

A. The Ministry has clarified that retirement home licensees must consult with their local Medical Officer of Health (MOH), or a person designated by the MOH, on an ongoing basis and at least annually regarding health care issues in the home.

Q2. Why can't Retirement Homes use IPAC Hubs for this consultation anymore?

A. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health allowed Retirement Homes to utilize their local IPAC Hubs for this consultation due to the increased volume local Public Health Units were seeing. As we are no longer in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health would like this consultation to return to the Retirement Homes' local Public Health Unit.

Q3. Why is this annual consultation required?

A. The purpose is to help identify and address health care issues and reduce the incidence of infectious disease outbreaks in retirement homes.

Q4. Can a retirement home use its local IPAC Hub to meet this requirement?

A. Yes, but only if the local Medical Officer of Health has formally designated the IPAC Hub, or one or more individuals within the Hub, to conduct the consultation on their behalf.

Q5. Does every IPAC Hub automatically qualify as a designate?

A. No. An IPAC Hub can only fulfill the requirement if it has been designated by the local Medical Officer of Health.

Q6. How can a licensee find out who they should consult with?

A. Licensees should contact their local public health unit to confirm whether consultations should occur with the Medical Officer of Health directly or with a designated individual or organization.

Q7. Should licensees obtain confirmation in writing?

A. Yes. Written confirmation is recommended and can support compliance during RHRA inspections.

Q8. What should licensees do if they have previously relied on an IPAC Hub for their annual consultation?

A. They should contact their local public health unit for direction on who they must consult with going forward. They have until December 31, 2026, to obtain this direction.

Q9. What happens if a licensee has not had a consultation within the last year?

A. They may be cited during an inspection if they cannot demonstrate attempts to arrange the required annual consultation.

Q10. Does this clarification mean retirement homes should stop working with IPAC Hubs?

A. No. Continued engagement with local IPAC Hubs is strongly encouraged because they provide valuable infection prevention and control support.

Q11. What should a licensee do now?

A. Contact their local public health unit, confirm who is authorized to conduct the consultation, obtain written confirmation where possible, keep documentation, and continue engaging with IPAC Hubs for additional support.