

## Key Messages – Use of Physical Barriers (e.g., plexiglass)

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- Thank you for sharing your concerns – we appreciate that you want to ensure the safety of yourself, your colleagues, and your patients/clients/residents while at work.
- While it is not the only measure to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, VCH's IPAC and Employee Safety teams recognize that **there may be situations where plexiglass might be considered**.
- For example, reception areas that are accessible to the public with no screening available ahead of time or where the setting may not be conducive to maintaining the recommended two meter (6 feet) physical distancing guidance.
- Plexiglass and other physical barriers **are considered an engineering control on the hierarchy of controls but are ineffective for preventing exposure as a sole risk mitigating measure**.
- While you may see plexiglass in other environments (e.g., grocery stores, transit, reception desks), within VCH, **there are a multitude of other measures in place that are higher on the hierarchy of effectiveness to support staff and keep everyone safe** including (but not limited to):
  - Pre-screenings conducted both over the phone (prior to appointment) and at all site entry points
  - Consistent and proper use of PPE that is supported by ongoing education
  - Robust recovery safety plans and checklists developed to ensure all care settings have implemented the recommended precaution measures
  - Routine cleaning practices for high touch surfaces
  - Proper respiratory and hand hygiene etiquette for prevention of the transmission of disease.
  - Strategic locations of the Alcohol-based Hand Rub (ABHR) stations
  - Visitation limitations to minimize foot traffic in our sites
  - Up-to-date COVID-19 information and resources on the [IPAC Website](#)
- Under unique circumstances where the outlined measures are deemed ineffective, your direct leader may connect with Employee Safety to **conduct a risk assessment** and offer recommendations on the most effective approach.
- For any areas that have installed plexiglass, it is important to **clean and disinfect all surfaces a minimum of 2x per day**.
- While physical barriers are an example of an engineering control that can reduce droplet transmission, **VCH's IPAC and Employee Safety teams generally do not recommend the use of plexiglass as we have many other safety measures in place for staff**.