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## MEMORANDUM

- TO:** Health workers, health sector employers and other health system partners
- RE:** Revisions to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Guidance on the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus and a reminder about The Hajj
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The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Health Ontario continue to monitor and assess the risk posed by the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

As of July 23, 2014, the [World Health Organization has reported](#) that there have been 837 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV including at least 291 related deaths. The risk posed by MERS-CoV in Ontario continues to be low. However, it is important that health workers are prepared to detect, investigate and implement appropriate occupational health & safety and infection prevention & control measures in the event that a case is exported from the Middle East to Ontario.

As you are aware, the ministry has issued [Guidance for Health Workers and Health Sector Employers on MERS-CoV](#). I would like to draw your attention to recent revisions to this guidance related to the case definition for persons under investigation, treatment advice and laboratory testing recommendations. As the global public health community continues to understand this virus better, there may be further changes to the ministry's guidance. I encourage health workers and health sector employers to review the information on this website regularly to ensure they are following the latest guidance.

The Hajj 2014 will take place this year between approximately October 2 and 7, 2014 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This spiritual pilgrimage is the largest annual gathering in the world. As with other mass gathering events, the large numbers of people expected to be in attendance during this year's Hajj may increase the risk of transmission of certain infectious diseases, such as influenza and meningococcal disease. Travellers should also be aware that cases of MERS-CoV have been identified in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Public Health Agency of Canada has posted a [Travel Health Notice](#) about The Hajj 2014, which health workers may wish to share with clients/patients that are attending this year's event.

As always, the ministry is available to support you during urgent situations that may arise. You can contact the ministry on a 24/7 basis through the Health Care Provider Hotline at 1-866-212-2272.

Thank you very much,

Original signed by

Graham Pollett, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Interim Chief Medical Officer of Health