

27 Jul 2020

Recipients of Cir 186/2020

FAQs for MOH Circular No 186/2020 on the Updated Guidance on Cross-Institutional Movement of Healthcare Workers Post Circuit Breaker

GENERAL FAQs

1) Who does the updated guidance on Cross-Institutional Movement of Healthcare Workers apply to?

The guidance applies to all healthcare workers (HCWs) working in a healthcare institution, who may be employees, self-employed, agency personnel or locums.

2) What are the kind of movement restrictions that are applicable for the different healthcare settings?

Movements to and from any of the following types of settings are no longer subject to caps on places of practice, and therefore do not require MOH approval if movement is required:

- Public hospitals, national specialty centres and polyclinics
- Community hospitals
- Private hospitals and ambulatory day surgery centres
- Private dental and medical clinics
- COVID-19 facilities, swab teams or screening centres

Home-based settings and community settings such as schools, Community nodes in Community Centres/ Residents' Committee centres, Senior Activity Centres are also not considered healthcare institutions and therefore not subject to these manpower movement guidelines.

Please note that movements into and within the long-term care setting remain subject to restrictions. (Please refer to para 5 of MOH Circular No 185/2020 dated 15 Jul 2020). Approval from MOH is required for deviations to the movement restrictions for the long-term care setting.

3) When do we need to seek MOH's approval for staff movement?

As a principle, movement between healthcare institutions should continue to be minimised as far as possible. Specifically, movements into and within the long-term care setting continue to be restricted and subject to MOH approval. For example, HCWs in the public healthcare institutions and private hospitals should continue to seek approval from MOH to practice in the long-term care setting, as should HCWs in the long-term care setting who need to deviate from the maximum of their base of practice plus four places of practice in the long-term care setting.

4) What are the healthcare institutions in long-term care setting?

Healthcare institutions in the long-term care setting include renal dialysis centres, inpatient hospices, nursing homes, and centre-based care organisations.

5) With the lifting of cross-institutional movement restrictions, does it mean that HCWs are no longer restricted to the number of sites guided under MOH Circular No. 102/2020?

In general, there are no longer restrictions to the number of places of practice (including offsite COVID-19 facilities) a HCW can practice in, with the exception of the long term care setting and RHS-led community services. HCWs may also wish to refer to sector-specific guidance with respect to:

- RHS-led community care services (MOH Circular Nos 158/2020 and 188/2020)
- Long-term care setting (issued by AIC)
- Resumption of pharmacist-led medication review services for nursing homes in early phase two (circulation by email on 1 Jul 2020)

6) Are HCWs now allowed to go to another HCI for training purposes?

Yes, HCWs will be allowed to go to another HCI for training purposes if required. HCWs from the long-term care setting are subject to some conditions (see FAQ 7). HCWs should observe the necessary safety precautions and adhere to the general safe management guidelines and safe distancing measures. Reference may be taken against MOE's Phase 2 guidelines for Safe Resumption of Private Tuition and Enrichment as well as Arrangements for Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning for guidelines on maximum capacity and group sizes.

7) Are HCWs working in the long-term care setting such as at NHs, SCCs, allowed to attend training at another healthcare institution, including public healthcare institutions? Is approval required?

HCWs from the long-term care setting are allowed to attend training for continuing education and upgrading subject to the following precautions:

- The training takes place in the long-term care or community-based setting (including at Institutes of Higher Learning);
- Strict safe management measures are in place, especially if training involves HCWs from outside the long-term care settings
- Observe the necessary safety precautions and adhere to the general safe management and safe distancing measures.

As far as possible, training for LTC HCWs should be done within the long-term care or community-based settings. Approval from MOH is required if the training is taking place in acute or community hospital campuses (including venues such as Singhealth Academia, Alice Lee Institute of Advanced Nursing). We will assess the necessary precautionary and safe management measures as part of the approval process.

8) Can HCWs working in acute hospitals or community hospitals attend the same training as HCWs who work in the long term care setting?

Strict safe management measures should be in place for all training sessions. HCWs from the LTC setting can continue to attend the same training as HCWs from other care settings taking into account that such measures are in place.

9) For training programmes such as the MOH ISS and MOH Nursing Leadership Programme (NLP) which may entail attachments to Nursing Homes as part of the training. For such movements to the LTC sector, can we take it that they have been pre-approved by MOH or do we need to put up a request for MOH's approval via Annex A?

Any movements into LTC sector, including clinical attachments, requires MOH approval. For formal programmes, the programme coordinator would be required to seek MOH's approval via Annex A (i.e. the movements should not be taken to be pre-approved by MOH).

10) For staff who volunteers in the LTC sector in their own time, are they required to seek MOH approval on a named-HCW basis via Annex A through their institutions or would it be regulated by the LTC institutions?

For Phase 2, volunteer-led activities in the LTC setting are not allowed for resumption yet.

REQUIREMENT FOR TESTING

11) Do all HCWs new to the healthcare system need to be tested for COVID-19 prior to starting employment?

Only new HCWs, MOHH-employed doctors/dentists and PGY1s in PHIs, private hospitals, polyclinics or community hospitals who are new to the healthcare system should be tested for COVID-19. These include employees, agency or outsourced staff, locums and MOHH-employed HCWs.

New hires at private ambulatory surgical centres, private dental or medical clinics and other such licensed healthcare institutions are not required to be tested prior to starting work, but should adhere to the appropriate PPE and safe distancing measures. The long-term care sector will be issuing sector-specific guidance for such testing for LTC organisations.

12) Does Circular No 186/2020 supercede Circular No 185/2020?

Circular No 186/2020 is meant for ambulatory day surgery centres, private specialist, dental or medical clinics, where testing of new HCWs is not required. Public hospitals and national specialty centres, polyclinics, community hospitals and private hospitals should

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comply with Circular No 185/2020. The long-term care sector will be issuing sector-specific guidance for such testing for LTC organisations.

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