

February 7, 2020 – 5:23 p.m.



All-staff bulletin

PHSA's weekly novel coronavirus update

Sent on behalf of Dr. Réka Gustafson, Vice President of Public Health & Wellness and Deputy Public Health Officer

As staff and professionals in the health care sector, we recognize your interest in the evolving novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) situation and we greatly appreciate your ongoing efforts to ensure you are informed and prepared to discuss with patients, colleagues, friends and family. To support you both at work and in the community, we will be sending out regular, all-staff updates every Friday while the situation remains active. We will continue to share time-sensitive information as needed.

The situation in B.C.:

- As of February 7, 2020, four people in British Columbia have tested positive for novel coronavirus. All four are in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.
- The cases and their contacts have been isolated in the community and the risk to the public remains low.
- Over the next few weeks, all PHSA services and clinicians should be prepared to see patients at risk of novel coronavirus infection.
- Screening and testing criteria are designed to identify people who could be infected to test and isolate early to prevent spread.
- British Columbia is following Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) guidance. Please check the [national case definition](#) frequently, as criteria for screening, testing and public health management are subject to frequent updates.
- If you are considering the diagnosis of novel coronavirus in a patient, please contact the medical microbiologist (call 604-875-2161 and ask to page the medical microbiologist), who will arrange for testing, provide guidance on infection control measures and work with local public health to arrange for management of the patient and his or her contacts in the community.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in effect, with representation from leaders across PHSA including Communications, Health Emergency Management BC, Quality and Safety, BCCDC, BCCDC Public Health Lab, and the Provincial Infection Control Network (PICNet).

- PHSA has also stood up an EOC to manage the organization's operational response and planning, including supply chain, infection prevention and control, communications, and other areas as required.
- There are linkages and close coordination with a provincial EOC, which includes executive membership from all of the regional health authorities and PHSA, along with the Ministry of Health and B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer.

The situation in Canada:

- Outside of British Columbia, three confirmed infections of 2019-nCoV have been reported in Canada, all from Ontario.
- PHAC continues to assess the public health risk associated with 2019-nCoV as low for Canada.
- Canadians on repatriation flights from Hubei province have arrived at the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) in Trenton, Ontario. The returning travellers, staff and flight crew will spend 14 days at CFB Trenton and will receive any necessary social and medical support.
- The BCCDC is working with local provincial and federal partners to monitor the situation and adjust recommendations as needed.

Hot topics for staff:

Prevention

- Novel coronavirus infection is spread through respiratory droplets. Droplet and contact precautions (including eye protection) should be used to care for patients with or at risk of novel coronavirus infection.
- Novel coronavirus is not an airborne pathogen. Airborne precautions for novel coronavirus, including the use of N95 respirators, are only needed if aerosol generating procedures are being performed.
- In addition to appropriate infection prevention and control measures when providing care, the best protection for staff and physicians is to follow good respiratory hygiene, including cleaning your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and staying home when you are sick.
- Since N95 respirators are required for other infections that are airborne, and for select aerosol generating procedures for novel coronavirus, we are taking proactive measures to ensure we maintain our stock and prevent any supply disruptions.
- Check POD for the [latest bulletins on N95 masks](#) and [fit testing schedules](#).

Self-isolation

- Because some people coming back from Hubei province may not recognize their symptoms immediately, PHAC is now asking travellers returning from Hubei province (including Wuhan city) in China to take extra precautions by staying away from others for 14 days as they monitor for symptoms. **This includes staying home from school or work during this period.**

- Other travellers from China are asked to monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of respiratory illness for 14 days after leaving China, and call ahead to their health care provider if they develop symptoms.

Your sources of information:

- The BCCDC website has a [dedicated area](#) for health professionals.
- PHSA also has a new [dedicated area on POD](#).
- For site-specific questions, please check in with your manager or clinical leadership.
- For trusted information from around the world, please check the [World Health Organization](#) website.

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