

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

As we continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation on the Sunshine Coast, we remain in a holding pattern from the end of last week. We still do not have any COVID-19 positive patients admitted to Sechelt Hospital, but continue to test any patients who are admitted with respiratory symptoms. We continue to operate as though COVID-19 is on the Coast and actively spreading.

A number of people have asked why widespread testing is not currently available. This is primarily a resource issue; we need to use our resources wisely so that our testing laboratories are not overwhelmed. This allows our healthcare system to get timely results for those people who are at highest risk of complications from COVID-19.

At the same time, the limited testing makes it impossible for us to know the true number of people who are infected with COVID-19 at this time. Please note that any estimations of the actual number of COVID-19 cases in British Columbia are extrapolations based on population data and statistical models, and are meant to give us an idea of where we might be, not to reflect actual numbers.

In the absence of accurate data, we must continue to assume that COVID-19 is here and actively spreading in our community. Our only tool to limit this spread is continued strict adherence to social distancing measures, which are crucial to containing COVID-19 and protecting our most vulnerable. Please continue to do everything you can to protect yourself and those around you from COVID-19 infection.

We are continuing to advocate for the development of widespread point-of-care COVID-19 testing, which has the potential to completely change the way that we deal with COVID-19. Such testing has been approved for use in the United States and elsewhere, but is not yet available in Canada. Until such time as we have point of care testing available, you all know what to do!

Returning travelers must self-isolate for 14 days from the date of return, and everyone who develops even mild cold or flu symptoms must self-isolate for ten days from the

Onset of symptoms (with or without a travel history). Self isolation guidelines are available at: <http://bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation>.

If you develop more severe cold or flu-like symptoms and feel you need to see a doctor, please call or text our new **Respiratory Assessment Clinic at 604-740-1252** or email <mailto:coastrespclinic@gmail.com>. If your symptoms are severe enough to require an ambulance to get to hospital, call 911.

The Respiratory Assessment Clinic is open seven days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note that this clinic is only for people living on the Sunshine Coast and that it is by appointment only.

Please check the Coast Reporter and the Local Weekly websites regularly for updates on COVID-19 in our community, and tune in daily on Eastlink Community TV at 5:30, 7:30 and 10:00 PM. Also stay tuned to Coast FM for breaking news on COVID-19.

**Keep well, wash your hands, keep your distance, and stay at home** unless you have a medical emergency or another essential task!

### **The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force**

Dr. Jennifer Baxter, Dr. Ted Krickan, Dr. Herman Mentz, Dr. Brian Nelson, Dr. Daren Spithoff