

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Family Doctors and health care workers are on the frontlines in the battle against COVID-19

### **Fraser Northwest Division launches assessment clinic and virtual care to combat the crisis**

Tuesday, March 24, 2020: Last week, the Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice (FNW Division) and partners established the [COVID-19 & Influenza-Like Illness Assessment Clinic](#) to serve patients in a safe, timely and effective manner. The clinic, which launched on Monday, March 16th, enabled Family Doctors across the region to see patients for virtual appointments as well as in-person assessments. The commitment to the community and unity amongst Family Doctors across New Westminster, Tri-Cities, and beyond has been truly incredible and inspiring. We applaud their passion, service, and commitment.

Dr. Ali Okhowat, Medical Director of the COVID-19 & Influenza-Like Illness Assessment Clinic, shared:

“We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from the physicians in our community. In the first week, there were 26 Physicians covering shifts on the virtual clinic and 6 Physicians working at the physical clinic. Since we launched on March 16th there have been 5,343 people that have used the COVID-19 online assessment tool at [www.covid19tool.com](http://www.covid19tool.com), 401 virtual appointments completed, and 266 physical assessments done [data from March 16-24 as of 4:00pm].”

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please use this physician-developed tool, [www.covid19tool.com](http://www.covid19tool.com), that will assess your symptoms and direct you toward the appropriate healthcare service. Should you be directed to seek further medical care upon completion, there are Family Doctors ready to assist you through a virtual appointment.

"We have the Doctors, they are available and willing to see patients virtually whether it is for COVID-19 concerns or patients who simply need to see a doctor and would otherwise go to a walk-in clinic," says Kristan Ash, Executive Director for the FNW Division. "Many people are feeling stress and anxiety during this time, and a virtual appointment with a Family Doctor can help."

The FNW Division also wants to help get this important message out from the President of Doctors of BC, Dr. Kathleen Ross:

“This crisis is unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetime. You will have heard the directive from our Provincial Health Officer, Dr Bonnie Henry, to self-isolate and practice social distancing. The time to act is now. Our province is in a state of emergency. What we do today will impact the health of British Columbians in the weeks to come.

Stay home unless absolutely necessary. No dinner parties. No shopping. No sports, not even outside. Instead, have coffee with a friend online. Keep six feet or two metres away from everyone at all times. That’s about the width of a car or two lengths of two arms stretched out. Call your loved ones and tell them to do the same.

Even if you don’t experience symptoms, you can still be carriers. This can cause harm to parents, grandparents, and other loved ones.

The time is now. We can’t wait one more hour or one more day. Let’s save lives, together.”

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About Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice Society

The [Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice Society](#) is one of 35 divisions in British Columbia that make up the [Divisions of Family Practice](#), an initiative of the [General Practice Services Committee](#), a partnership between the Province of B.C. and Doctors of B.C. Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice currently has almost 400 members that provide primary care services in Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody.

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