

<b>Date:</b>	March 13, 2020
<b>To:</b>	Leadership & Physicians
<b>From:</b>	Cathy Ulrich, CEO Dr. Raina Fumerton, Acting Chief Medical Health Officer
<b>Re:</b>	COVID-19

NH has an emergency operation centre (EOC) in place to respond to COVID-19. The EOC, with additional staff and physicians, has just completed a two-day coordinating session with task groups that included the following focused planning:

1. Phased scenario and response plan – Led by Fraser Bell and Jim Fitzpatrick. This group is looking at phases of response expansion and what triggers will be used to move between these response phases
2. Acute management and ambulatory care – Led by Dr. Sharla Olsen, Beth Ann Derksen and Ciro Panessa
3. Long-term care response and capacity – Led by Dr. Dick Raymond and Angela De Smit
4. Emergency Department and Patient Transfer – Led by Dr. Patrick Rowe and Jordan Oliver
5. Primary and Community Care / Urgent and Primary Care Centres – Led by Kelly Gunn, Dr. Dietrich Furstenburg and Jeff Hunter. This group is planning virtual care, screening and community management, and includes a Division of Family Practice reference group consisting of the Physician Lead and Executive Directors of all northern Divisions of Family Practice
6. Population and Public Health – Led by Dr. Raina Fumerton
7. Infection prevention & control and environmental cleaning – Led by Fraser Bell, Deanna Hembroff and Lois Barney
8. Staffing and Workplace Health & Safety – David Williams
9. Logistics and Supply – Mark De Croos and Michael Hoefer
10. Communications – Steve Raper
11. Business Continuity – Mark De Croos, Jeff Hunter, David Williams

This focused planning will prepare us for the response to COVID-19 over the coming months. As the next phase of these plans is implemented over the coming week, further information will be shared with you. This information will also be directly available on OurNH.

**New developments:**

- The World Health Organization has formally declared COVID-19 [a pandemic](#). However, this declaration is not anticipated to change BC's and NH's response. All international travellers into Canada (symptomatic and asymptomatic) are now being asked to self-isolate for 14 days
- Nasopharyngeal swabs for COVID-19 testing can be ordered from NH laboratories. Only one NP swab is required per patient for testing. Please use the BCCDC Virology Requisition and write COVID-19, indicating the need for testing. For further information, please see [BCCDC Lab Guidance](#)

- Provincial guidance on [respiratory protection](#) for healthcare workers caring for cases of COVID-19 is available on the BCCDC website

**Important to remember:**

We will no longer be asking clinicians to report when they are testing clients for COVID-19.

- Continue to test symptomatic clients with travel within the last 14 days to an affected area ([Situation Report](#)), or based on clinical suspicion for COVID-19.
- If you do test a client for COVID-19, ensure that you provide a [patient handout](#) . Please note that there is no need to ask a client's asymptomatic contacts to self-isolate.
- Patients may access their test results by calling the BC Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 results hotline at 1-833-707-2792 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm)

**Internal/health care guidance:**

- OurNH (requires NH login) - [Coronavirus – Updates, Processes, Resources](#)
- BC Centre for Disease Control – [Communicable Disease Control guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 facility entry reception poster](#)

**External (public):**

- BC Centre for Disease Control (updated daily) - [Information on novel coronavirus](#)
- HealthLinkBC.ca – [Health Feature - Coronavirus](#)
- Government of Canada - [2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update](#)

**Contact information:**

- Clinical staff who encounter a suspect case or who have any question/concerns should contact the Northern Health Communicable Diseases Hub (250-565-2990) during daytime hours, or the Medical Health Officer on call after hours (250-565-2000, press 7, ask for the Medical Health Officer on call).