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**Subject:** Northern Health COVID-19 update for stakeholders - Thursday, April 9, 2020  
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## Northern Health COVID-19 update for stakeholders

Thursday, April 9, 2020

### Provincial case counts and statements

- **As of April 9, 2020**, there were **24** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region.
- **Province of BC statistics:**
  - Confirmed cases: **1,370** (**34** new cases)
  - Deaths: **50** (**2** new)
  - In hospital: **132** (**38** in ICU)
  - Recovered: **858**
- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – April 8, 2020.

### Physical distancing: Guidance on compliance / enforcement

A March 31 BCCDC tipsheet provides information for compliance and enforcement officers on implementing public health orders for physical distancing. It also includes a useful template message that enforcement officers can use to respond to complainants.

Compliance and enforcement officers include community safety personnel, bylaw enforcement officers, provincial compliance enforcement officers, etc.

For full details, see [Compliance and Enforcement Guidance about Public Health Orders with respect to Physical Distancing](#)  
**Community-Level data on COVID-19**

We have received multiple requests for community-level data from people throughout Northern Health. Although we appreciate these concerns, Medical Health Officers, public health staff, and health care leaders have a legal obligation to protect the personal information they receive regarding cases of reportable communicable diseases. This includes the location of these cases, which is legally confidential patient information.

This information can be shared on a need-to-know basis. Information that can be shared publicly includes:

- Case counts at the health authority level
- Notification of outbreaks in high-risk settings, such as acute care and long-term care facilities. For COVID-19, a single case in a long-term-care facility is considered an outbreak. There are currently no facility outbreaks in Northern

Health.

- Notification of high-risk public exposures involving contacts that are not otherwise identifiable (such as the Pacific Dental Conference)

Appropriate prevention strategies and mitigation planning can, and should, be undertaken by all communities across the North. Health care providers should treat anyone who has symptoms compatible with COVID-19 as a potential case. For more information:

- [Physicians must not disclose information about COVID-19 patients—even if anonymized](#) (College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC)

### How to self-isolate when living in a multi-generational household

The BCCDC has developed guidance to provide advice on [how to self-isolate at home when you live with other family members or friends](#). It provides information about how you can care for yourself and protect those that you live with, especially those who are more vulnerable.

### Should I be wearing a mask to protect myself?

- Masks should be used by sick people to help prevent transmission to other people.
  - A mask will help keep a person's droplets contained.
- Federal and provincial public health officials have recently announced that use of non-medical face coverings **MAY** provide some additional protection against spreading illness in settings where other prevention measures are more challenging to practice, such as physical distancing.
  - Use of non-medical face coverings by the general public is **NOT** an alternative to practicing other recommended and directed prevention measures.
- Finally, use of non-medical face coverings or masks is not a recommended or required practice, it is an option.
  - Masks may give a person a false sense of security, and could increase the number of times people touch their own faces (e.g., to adjust the mask).

### More people now eligible for testing

As provincial capacity for COVID-19 testing is increasing, so is the list of groups for whom clinicians are now recommended to order tests, based on their clinical judgement.

The expanded list of groups for whom testing is now recommended includes those that are more vulnerable to complications due to COVID-19, or people who care for these vulnerable people. A full list can be found here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/lab-testing>.

Please note that the updated testing guidelines and expanded capacity for testing in B.C. are a relatively new development, and Northern Health testing sites are working to increase their capacity to accommodate any increase in testing volumes.

## **British Columbians and Canadians should avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including to the United States**

All international travellers returning to British Columbia are required by law to self-isolate

for **14 days upon their arrival** and complete a [self-isolation plan](#). Self-isolation plans must be reviewed by provincial government officials before travellers can return home. For more information on how to submit your self-isolation plan, go to [gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers](http://gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers).

Returning travellers that develop respiratory symptoms are also required to self-isolate for a period of **10 days after the onset of symptoms**, or when the symptoms resolve, whichever is later.

### **Talking to kids about COVID-19**

Are your children asking questions about COVID-19? Here are some [tips to help have these talks](#).

### **Temporary emergency child care for essential workers**

To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Province is launching a new process.

This process will match parents who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age with child care in their communities.

Starting today, essential workers can fill out a new “parent” form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed by calling 1-888-338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: [www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care](http://www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care). For further details, see the BC Government [press release](#).

### **Updated COVID-19 community guide**

Northern Health's COVID-19 community guide: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#) contains all the information you need to help keep your community safe and well informed. New additions this week:

- Translated resources on COVID-19 (Chinese, South Asian, Farsi, Korean, Italian, Hindi, Punjabi, and Indigenous languages) (page 21)
- 7 tips for talking to kids about COVID-19 (page 10)
- Guidance from the BCCDC on enforcing physical distancing orders (page 22; also see separate article on page 1 of this update.)

The community guide is current as of today, and will continue to be updated regularly online.

### **Trusted links and resources**

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC FAQ](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)

#### Health Canada FAQ

- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- For **non-medical info**, call **1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319** 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's webpage on current health topics](#). This page has links to the latest joint statements and orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer and a link to the Government of Canada's travel advice and advisories.

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