
News Releases

Manitoba MediaBulletin

March 14, 2020

COVID-19 BULLETIN #12

Three previously announced presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 have been lab confirmed, bringing the total number of confirmed positive cases in Manitoba to four. Public health investigations are continuing, but it appears that all four cases are travel related.

In keeping with social distancing strategies outlined to Manitobans and in consultation with key stakeholders, public health officials have advised suspending classes in Manitoba kindergarten to Grade 12 schools effective March 23 to April 10. This is being done to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Manitoba.

Public health officials are also advising schools and educational institutions to:

- ensure ill staff and students stay home from school, and support those who are self-isolating at home to ensure they do not fall behind in their studies;
- reduce activities in large groups and crowds;
- increase desk distance between students; and
- consider implementing virtual or online classrooms to reduce the number of people in classrooms and increase distance between staff and students.

Testing for COVID-19 has increased to more than 500 tests per day. Staff at the Cadham Provincial Laboratory are working hard to ensure results are available within 24 to 48 hours after a test is received at the lab. Once a positive test result is identified, the patient is notified by public health immediately.

Technical improvements were made to Health Links-Info Santé on Friday, allowing the service to handle more than 100 callers simultaneously, which is nearly triple its usual capacity. Further technical enhancements are being worked on and staffing numbers continue to be increased. The public is asked to continue to contact Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free) for COVID-19 and other health concerns including international travellers who have developed cold- or flu-like symptoms within the past 14 days of returning to Canada.

All health-care providers in the province are being strongly advised to cancel or postpone all non-essential travel outside of Manitoba. All staff have been told they should be prepared to self-isolate for 14 days if they choose to travel internationally including to the United States.

Public health officials continue to recommend social distancing measures for all Manitobans including:

- cancelling or postponing any large-scale events (events with more than 250 attendees);
- minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two metres) contact between individuals in public;
- avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes;
- disinfecting frequently used surfaces;
- following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus; and

Send an email / Envoyer un courriel

- avoiding all non-essential travel, as well as crowded places and events.

Health-care providers are strongly discouraging the public from visiting any health-care facility, including long-term care facilities, if they have:

- returned from international travel in the past 14 days;
- been directed to self-monitor or self-isolate for 14 days; or
- are experiencing cold and flu symptoms, such as a cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, headache or weakness.

Visitors arriving at health-care facilities may also be asked direct questions about their symptoms, contacts and travel history upon arrival. This includes HSC Winnipeg, which will begin restricting access points to the campus on Sunday to ensure proper screening of visitors arriving at the facility can occur.

Traffic at the four community screening locations in Winnipeg continues. These locations include Access sites in Fort Garry, Winnipeg West and Transcona, as well as the Mount Carmel Clinic. All sites are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. this weekend, and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Patients should be referred for testing to attend to the community screening locations. Walk-in traffic without a referral is discouraged.

Additionally, HSC Winnipeg has also opened a testing clinic for low-acuity patients in its William Avenue mall, where patients can be tested for both COVID-19 and influenza.

Employers should review their business continuity plans and take steps to ensure employees can stay home when ill, without facing barriers such as the requirement for sick notes, and work from home if possible. Employers should also discontinue non-essential, work-related travel outside of Manitoba and encourage virtual meetings to reduce prolonged, close contact between individuals.

People are encouraged to take common prevention measures including regular handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds. Make sure to dry hands thoroughly. Alternatively, people can use an alcohol-based hand cleanser if their hands are not visibly dirty. People should also cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into their sleeve.

Being prepared also means using official sources for the most up-to-date and accurate information. The Manitoba government is also urging media to exercise caution in reporting information related to the evolving COVID-19 situation and to avoid hearsay or speculation, as this can spread misinformation.

For more information, visit www.manitoba.ca/covid19/.

- 30 -

manitoba.ca | 1-866-MANITOBA

Send an email / Envoyer un courriel