

March 17, 2020

**COVID-19  
BULLETIN #17**

The Manitoba government is taking additional proactive measures to help reduce the impact of COVID-19. This includes:

- suspending services at licensed child-care centres, effective end-of-day Friday, March 20;
- recommending parents with children in these centres begin to make alternate arrangements as soon as possible, even though centres will remain open for the remainder of the week;
- continuing to allow home-based child-care providers to operate; and
- creating dedicated child-care options for front-line and essential services staff who need them.

Parents who will be providing front-line health care or are a member of a fire, police or paramedic service and will not be able to find alternative child care while services are suspended are asked to contact 204-945-0776 or 1-888-213-4754 (toll-free).

Parents are asked to keep all children and youth home if they have a fever or other respiratory illness symptoms. Schools will be notifying parents that students will be sent home if they have any of these symptoms.

The province is also advising that:

- teachers will continue to be on the job, either in schools or at home, to create learning plans and continue teaching using the distance learning options available; and
- all casinos will close effective midnight tonight.

Public health officials are recommending the immediate suspension of visitors in

long-term care facilities across Manitoba. Exceptions for compassionate reasons or end of life will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of individual facility managers.

In addition, public health officials are recommending the cancellation of gatherings of more than 50 people, consistent with the announcement made by the federal government.

Public health officials are strongly advising all Manitobans, including health-care providers, to cancel or postpone any non-essential international travel. In addition, public health officials are recommending all international travellers should self-isolate and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after returning to Canada.

Health officials are reminding physicians, health-care providers and support staff returning from international travel that they MUST self-identify to their organization/site's occupational health services.

To support social distancing efforts, Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living's registration and client services office at 300 Carlton St. will be temporarily closed to the public. Staff will continue to register people for Manitoba health coverage and Manitoba Pharmacare benefits through email, phone, fax and mail. Forms and contact information can be found at [www.gov.mb.ca/health/mhsip/forms.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/mhsip/forms.html).

Yesterday, Manitoba's Provincial Court, Court of Queen's Bench and Court of Appeals all introduced new provisions to restrict or reschedule matters over the next several weeks. For more information, visit [www.manitobacourts.mb.ca/news/covid-19-update-march-16-2020/](http://www.manitobacourts.mb.ca/news/covid-19-update-march-16-2020/).

A new self-assessment tool is now online to help Manitobans determine whether they need to call Health Links–Info Santé to possibly get a referral or to self-isolate. The tool provides interactive advice to users concerned about whether

they have contracted COVID-19. It is expected the tool will help with call volumes. For more information, visit [www.manitoba.ca/covid19](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19).

Additionally, people calling Health Links–Info Santé can soon expect to hear a new interactive voice response system (IVR). The IVR will allow COVID-19 screening questions to be answered prior to users being connected to operators, which should shorten the length of calls. This technology is anticipated to be up and running as soon as this afternoon.

Any person concerned about their exposure to or risk of having COVID-19 should call Health Links–Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257 before arriving at a testing site. Nearly 1,700 patients have visited dedicated testing sites in Winnipeg and Thompson in the past five days including 481 yesterday.

New dedicated testing sites for COVID-19 opened today at the following locations:

- Channing Auditorium in the Flin Flon Community Hall, 2 North Ave., Flin Flon; and
- Guy Hall, 28 First St. West, The Pas.

Both sites will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

All Manitobans should continue to practice good social distancing strategies including minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two metres) contact between other individuals in public.

For more information, visit [www.manitoba.ca/covid19](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19).

