

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses
Hospital Infection Control Departments
Hospital Emergency Departments

Updated Ministry guidance was received yesterday. The Northern MOHs have discussed how to apply the document with a northern lens. The situation continues to change rapidly.

Updated Testing Criteria

The following groups should be prioritized for testing:

- Symptomatic health care workers (regardless of care delivery setting) and staff who work in health care facilities;
- Symptomatic residents and staff in Long Term Care facilities and retirement homes;
- Hospitalized patients admitted with respiratory symptoms (new or exacerbated);
- Symptomatic members of remote, isolated, rural and/or indigenous communities;
- Symptomatic travelers identified at a point of entry to Canada;
- People with symptoms who have traveled outside of Canada within 14 days **or** close contact with a confirmed or probable case **or** close contact with a symptomatic person who has traveled outside of Canada;
- Symptomatic travelers from urban centers where community transmission is suspected within Canada can be considered for testing.

Based on the March 25, 2020 Guidance on Testing for COVID-19, if swabs and PPE are available testing **can be** done based on clinical assessment and not based on the case definition. However, please note, all symptomatic people (other than health care workers, see below) are advised to self-isolate, **irrespective of testing results**, for 14 days from symptom onset or until they are clinically improved (ie: no cough or fever).

Clearance of symptomatic individuals to return to work:

		Confirmed (+ve test)	Symptomatic (not tested)	Negative results
Case Status	HCW (should be swabbed)	2 negative swabs 24h apart once asymptomatic	14 days isolation after symptom onset AND full symptom resolution	Can return to work once clinically improved
	Hospitalized or LTCH or RH resident	2 negative swabs 24h apart once asymptomatic	14 days isolation after symptom onset AND full symptom resolution	If hospitalized, can return to LTCH or RH
	Community (not HCW)	14 days isolation after symptom onset, if afebrile and clinically improved	14 days isolation after symptom onset, if afebrile and clinically improved	14 days isolation after symptom onset, if afebrile and clinically improved

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local Timiskaming Health Unit:

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

New Liskeard

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HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ALERT

March 26, 2020



Other highlights from the updated Guidance Document:

- Swabs should **NOT** be done on asymptomatic patients.
- Close contacts of a patient who is swab-pending should also self-isolate until results are known.
- Close contacts of a symptomatic patient who is not tested should also self-isolate for 14 days.
- Acute care settings are responsible for monitoring health care workers who were exposed to confirmed cases at work.

Please encourage patients to self-triage by using the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool found at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>.

For non-acute Quebec patients, please direct them to call 1-877-644-4545 for assessment rather than swabbing the patient in Ontario.

If you would like to be added to the Friday Health Care Provider teleconference, please contact Rachelle Cote at coter@timiskaminghu.com.

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