

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Update for Partners - #6

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

February 28, 2020

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Message from the Medical Officer of Health

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) continues to actively monitor the global outbreak of respiratory illness caused by COVID-19. We will continue to provide weekly updates as needed as a means to support your information needs, planning, communications and access to resources. Previous updates can be found at www.smdhu.org/coronavirus.

Dr. Charles Gardner
Medical Office of Health

Current Situation (as of 08:00 February 28, 2020)

World

- There are more than 83,000 cases of COVID-19 worldwide (in accordance with the case definitions). The vast majority of these cases have been reported from China where more than 78,000 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed.
- **NEW** - For the first time since the first identified case of COVID-19, there have been more new cases reported from countries outside of China than from China.
- COVID-19 has resulted in more than 2800 deaths worldwide, with 98% of the deaths occurring in China and other deaths occurring in eight countries and on one cruise ship.
- For up-to-date information on the countries affected by COVID-19 see the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control website](#).

Canada

- **NEW** - There are 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Canada – six in Ontario and seven in British Columbia. Some of these cases are now resolved.
- To date there have been zero cases of COVID-19 in repatriated Canadians.
- No deaths have occurred in Canada.

- For up-to-date information on the situation in Canada see the [Government of Canada](#) (GOC) website.

Ontario

- **NEW** - There are two new confirmed positive cases and one new presumptive positive case of COVID-19. This brings the total number of cases in Ontario to six, three of which have resolved.
- The total number of patients tested to date is 699, however these numbers continue to change and are updated daily on the [Ministry of Health website](#).
- For up-to-date information on the situation in Ontario see the [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) (OMOH) website.

Simcoe Muskoka

- At this time, there are no presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Simcoe Muskoka.

Risk Assessment

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to assess the risk of spread of COVID-19 within Canada continues to be **low**.
- The risk to Canadian travellers abroad is generally low but varies depending on the destination. A number of travel advisories have been added for Canadian travellers. Check the [Government of Canada Travel Advice and Advisories](#) for a full list of travel advisories.
- There is increasing evidence of community transmission in countries outside of China. The health unit is preparing for this possibility occurring locally in the upcoming weeks/months.
- Given the increasing likelihood of a COVID-19 pandemic, we are now advising that people prepare for that possibility by ensuring at least a two week supply of food staples, medications, and essential household supplies, and have a family care plan in the event family members fall ill or have to undergo home isolation due to public health measures, such as quarantine.

Public Health Planning and Response

International

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a protocol for the investigation of early cases of COVID-19. The protocol is designed to gain an early understanding of the key clinical, epidemiological and virological characteristics of the first cases of COVID-19 infection detected in any country, to inform public health guidance to manage cases and reduce potential spread and impact of infection.
- For more information see the [WHO daily situation reports](#).

National

- **NEW** – The case definition for COVID-19 has been updated with new regions of the world where community transmission is ongoing. Recommendations for travellers coming to Canada has been updated and expanded to include travel history from Mainland China (excluding Macau and Taiwan), Iran, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Recommendations are:

All travellers who are returning from Hubei province in China should:

- report to your local public health unit within 24 hours of arriving in Canada (in Simcoe Muskoka contact SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520);
- **stay at home and avoid close contact with others, including those in your home, for a total of 14 days** from the date that you left Hubei province; and
- monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing and contact Telehealth, your health care provider, or your local public health department (in Simcoe Muskoka contact SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520), by phone if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

Anyone who has been to an affected area* should:

- monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing;
- avoid places where you cannot easily separate yourself from others if you become ill; and
- contact Telehealth, your health care provider, or your local public health department (in Simcoe Muskoka contact SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520), by phone if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

* **Affected areas** as of February 27, 2020 **include:** Mainland China (excluding Taiwan and Macau), Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

- The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that travellers continue to follow usual health precautions such as washing their hands, avoiding contact with people who are sick, and covering your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing. They also advise Canadians to:
 - always tell health care providers about travel history if they become ill after returning to Canada
 - avoid high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets, and areas where animals may be slaughtered
 - avoid contact with animals (alive or dead);
 - avoid surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them;
 - avoid eating raw or undercooked animal products; and
 - be aware of the local situation and follow local public health advice.
- The Government of Canada (GOC) continues to advise Canadians to:
 - Avoid all non-essential travel to China; and
 - Avoid all travel to Hubei Province in China.
 - Leave China if their presence is not essential.

- Check the [Government of Canada Travel Advice and Advisories](#) for a full list of travel advisories.

Provincial

- The Ontario Ministry of Health (OMOH) continues to work with federal and local partners to support the repatriated citizens under quarantine and those in self-isolation.
- All individuals under quarantine in Trenton, Ontario have been released from quarantine.

SMDHU

- [Screening signs](#) for any sector/location are available in multiple languages.
- We continue to update our health sector partners as often as necessary with new information and/or updated guidance documents and resources through [HealthFAXs](#) and through easy access links on our [health professional portal](#).
- We continue to update our partners and the public through the [SMDHU website](#), social media, press releases, media interviews and [fact sheets](#) (available in multiple languages).
- Our Health Connection line continues to respond to calls about COVID-19 from public and health sector partners.
- SMDHU continues to work with health sector partners as per our [Infectious Disease Emergency Response Plan](#) to ensure screening and infection prevention control measures are in place.
- Simcoe Muskoka residents are to contact SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 if:
 - they travelled to an *affected area in the last 14 days (within 24 hours of arriving in Canada) AND they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

*** Affected areas as of February 27, 2020 include:** Mainland China (excluding Taiwan and Macau), Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

Other Available Resources

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) (OMOH)
- [Government of Canada](#) (GOC)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)
- [World Health Organization](#) (WHO)