

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Health PEI Executive Leadership and Leadership Forum
FROM: Dr. Heather Morrison, Chief Public Health Officer
Marion Dowling, Executive Director and Chief Nursing Officer
DATE: March 31, 2020
SUBJECT: Joint Response Team re: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

*The Joint Response Team incident command structure remains activated at **Level 3 Emergency Response & Planning for an Emergency Response** to the COVID-19 Pandemic under the Health PEI All Hazards Plan. The Joint Response Structure includes representatives between Health PEI and the Department of Health and Wellness, who continue to work together. The following is an All Staff and Physicians Update.*

Health PEI staff and physicians have done excellent work to prepare for more patients as this pandemic continues, including work to improve capacity in our health system to care for Islanders. Thank you for your dedication and attention to this crucial piece of our preparedness.

Surveillance

As of March 31, PEI has 21 confirmed cases of COVID-19, all related to international travel. Our first case, reported on March 14, has recovered and is off self-isolation. Public Health Nursing continues to do daily follow-up with cases and close contacts of cases in PEI.

Over 800 people have been tested for COVID-19. For up-to-date testing numbers, please visit the website: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19>

As of March 31 at 12:30 ADT, a total of 7,708 cases of COVID-19, including 89 deaths, have been reported in Canada.

Public Measures

Over the past few weeks, increasing levels of public health measures have been put in place in PEI. These measures are important to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in PEI while waiting for the development of a vaccine and approval of effective drug therapies. Outbreaks of COVID-19 continue to increase around the world and across Canada. The goal of the prevention efforts is to ensure that cases of COVID-19 are detected quickly and identification of any contacts are rapidly identified. Isolating these cases from others while they recover is essential to prevent disease spread.

A Public Health Order was issued by the PEI Chief Public Health Officer for travellers to self-isolate following international travel. As cases continued to spread across Canada, the Order expanded to include travellers returning from out of province. In addition, local Environmental Health and Occupational Health Officers have been following up on complaints and issuing warnings in instances where the Order is not being followed. For

those who are not self-isolating, Dr. Morrison continues to emphasize in daily press conferences how important it is to maintain Physical (Social) Distancing as another measures to prevent disease spread.

- Screening and contact information is being collected at all PEI Points of Entry
- Enforcement and follow up for individuals who are non-compliant is on-going
- People flagged for potential testing through 811 March 5th – March 29th: 948
- Public calls to 1-800 COVID telephone line between March 16th -30th: 1910
- As of March 29:
 - Complaints received (56)
 - Residences attended by officers (26)
 - Written Warning for failure of PHO (9)
 - Verbal Warnings to self-isolate (12)

PPE

The Joint Response Team continues to do everything within our ability to have the supplies we need as we face this pandemic. This has included requests for supplies, reaching out through the federal government and private industries for assistance.

Our objective is to keep our providers safe and, at the same time be responsible with our allocation of these essential resources so they are available to be used in the appropriate health care settings for all of us in the weeks and months ahead.

Continued effort is required to appropriately use and conserve personal protective equipment (PPE). Further guidance and direction regarding surgical masks and face shields in certain settings, for instance, is anticipated.

Town Halls

Dr. Morrison and Marion Dowling held a second Virtual Town Hall for physicians and nurse practitioners on Monday, March 30. The recorded session is available by clicking [here](#) and using the password TownHallMar30.

An all-staff Town Hall will be planned for the near future. Due to the nature of the platform, we ask that you send questions for the town hall to Covid-19 Employee Information@ihis.org with the subject line “All Staff Town Hall Questions.” These questions will be reflected in the live webinar broadcast and recording of the session with the Joint Response Team leaders.

HPEI Operations (Kelley Rayner - Section Chief)

- Bed management planning continues as we work to increase capacity for a possible surge in patients. This includes moving patients where possible from QEH and PCH to community hospitals.
- Current objective is to meet 40% occupancy for PCH & QEH by today (March 30) at 1600hrs. Community Hospitals and Hillsborough Hospital will support the decanting of patients from PCH and QEH as these larger facilities will be the initial hospitals to care for admitted patients with COVID-19.
- Task Force has been created with objective of defining populations/patients for hospital and for home or community (led by Dr. Martha Carmicheal and supported by Dr. Hussam Azzam and Deborah Bradley).
- Charlottetown testing clinic moved to Eastlink Centre and offering drive-thru testing. We are also offering a Cough and Fever Clinic at the same site. Both are operational as of March 28, 2020 and by appointment only.

- Summerside testing site has been providing a drive-thru testing and their Cough and Fever Clinic began March 30 at the Slemon Park site.
- PPE: All sites/services will be on allocation with a site lead designated for each areas. Developing plans to optimize and conserve PPE supplies.
- Laboratory Services are working on providing COVID-19 testing capability on PEI. This may be available in the coming week.
- Pre and Post-natal guidelines have been developed as well as guidelines for supporting the care of pediatric patients.

Planning Section (Tanya Tynski- Section Chief)

- Virtual care options for health care providers are being further explored to ensure compliance with privacy and IT Security impacts prior to implementation.
- The human resources team has reached out to Health PEI retirees (some of who still work for us), health care professional associations, community groups, professional colleges, educational facilities, and the public to develop a centralized provincial inventory list of additional resources/staff if required to assist in meeting operational requirements during this pandemic.
- Managers are working diligently to identify staffing surpluses and deficits, and together are working on a redeployment strategy to ensure we have the essential numbers of staff to deliver safe care to Islanders in the weeks and months ahead.
- 57 new graduate nurses have been matched to work sites. These offers are out to operational sites for final review prior to job offers being made.
- Nursing students are being matched to locations and offers will be made this week.

Logistics Update (Kellie Hawes – Section Chief)

- Vendors continue to experience global supply chain issues.
- The logistics team is monitoring and procuring all critical supplies daily, including working with our usual vendors, new vendors, and government agencies.
- We are currently working with a vendor that could supply a 200 L solvent barrel or a 20 L carboy container of hand sanitizer. This product would require bottling in smaller useable containers.
- QEH has 10 fully functioning adult ventilators and 3 transport vents and 2 neonatal ventilators. PCH has 4 ventilators (19 total)
- Through the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) we have been able to secure a delivery of an additional 26 ventilators expected in the coming week.
- Health PEI issued a PO on March 23 to purchase 12 ventilators. Estimated delivery date mid-May – exact date not confirmed by vendor.
- We have participated in a Federal Bulk order opportunity which included the purchase of ventilators (15).
- The QEH also has 4 adult BiPAP machines which could be used for ventilation support as well as 6 operating room gas machines which could be used for some ventilation support.

The following resources are available for your reference:

1. [Prince Edward Island COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus Guidelines](#)
2. [Infection Prevention and Control for Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\): Interim Guidance for Acute Healthcare Settings](#)
3. [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings](#)
4. [Interim guidance: Public health management of cases and contacts associated with novel coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
5. [COVID-19 National Surveillance Case Definition](#)
6. [PEI Government Novel Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions](#)
7. [Public Health Guidance on COVID-19 for Schools \(K-12\) and Childcare Programs](#)
8. [Technical COVID-19 Disease Assumptions for clinicians and public health authorities](#)
9. [Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) in Canada](#)
10. [Risk-informed decision-making for mass gatherings during COVID-19 global outbreak](#)
11. [Febrile respiratory illness screening tool](#)

As a reminder, you must report any suspect cases of COVID-19 to the CPHO as soon as observed. The [PEI COVID-19 Guideline](#) is an evergreen document and will be revised to reflect updates in recommendations. Health Care Providers can contact CPHO at 902-368-4996 if you have any questions.

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