

April 14, 2020

Dear CAOs and Municipal Special Event Planners:

In follow up to the declared state of emergency by the provincial government on March 17, 2020, the province of Ontario ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses under [Regulation 82/20](#). Under [communications](#) provided by the Province in introducing the list of essential workplaces, the list does *not preclude the operation or delivery of services of any publicly funded agency or organization that delivers or supports government operations and services, including operations and services of the health care sector.*

As municipalities in Simcoe Muskoka continue to operate in order to support critical and essential functions for their communities, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) supports comprehensive risk reduction strategies in public institutions including government offices. Examples of such strategies can be found [here](#) and include (among others):

- Reducing the need for employees to come on site and using remote-work solutions to work-from-home
- Conducting press conferences remotely using technology to facilitate briefings to the public and media
- Conducting internal meetings using means of secured technology and infrastructure (web-based or teleconference)
- Ensuring that staff required to attend offices are separated by physical means and at least 6 feet of distance.
- Reinforcing cough etiquette and hand hygiene by staff and visitors
- Screening staff and the public for any symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the workplace
- Requiring sick employees to stay home for 14 days
- Ensuring routine and frequent cleaning and disinfection occurs throughout the day in workspaces

These strategies assist with facilitating physical distancing, reducing gatherings to no more than 5 and where remote means of work are applied, it reduces the risk of transmission. All of this also sets good examples for the public.

At SMDHU we have moved effectively to incorporate these strategies. This includes moving to remote press conferences including the use of Facebook Live resulting in a large public audience (up to 15,000 viewers) in addition to providing all interested media with easy access to the press conference. Within our offices, we have implemented barriers for administrative staff interacting with the public, and screen staff and the public for COVID-19 symptoms. We are also actively working on moving many of our staff to work-from-home arrangements where possible.

Updates for posted Regulations and provincial orders pertaining specifically to COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/emergency-information>. SMDHU is committed to providing

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updates to the emergency orders and information for the public and our municipalities at <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus/Pandemic-Planning>. For further information on the requirements to assist your municipality, please contact a Public Health Inspector 1-877-721-7520.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

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