

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Update for Partners - #7

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

March 5, 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 10:00 March 5, 2020)

World

- There are more than 95,000 cases of COVID-19 worldwide (in accordance with the case definition). The majority of these cases have been reported from China where more than 80,000 cases have been confirmed with 80 other countries now reporting cases of COVID-19.
- The vast majority of new cases continue to be reported from countries outside of China.
- COVID-19 has resulted in more than 3,200 deaths worldwide, reported in 13 countries (China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, USA, Japan, France, Australia, Philippines, San Marino, Spain, Taiwan, and Thailand) 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 have been 33 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Canada thus far, including 20 in Ontario, 12 in British Columbia and one in Quebec. Some of these cases are now resolved.

- 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** – Two new cases of COVID-19 were announced in Ontario this week; one with travel history from Iran and the other from Egypt.
- There have been a total 18 cases of COVID-19 in Ontario, four of which have been resolved.
- The total number of people tested in Ontario to date is 1,566, however these numbers continue to change and are updated daily.
- There are currently 78 cases under investigation in Ontario.
- For up-to-date information on the situation in Ontario see the [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) (OMOH) website.

Simcoe Muskoka

- There are no presumptive or confirmed cases in our region at this time, however this could change quickly.
- **NEW** - It is advised that communities, organizations, businesses and families prepare for potential disruption to normal life if the virus starts to infect people locally. General information and tips about how to prepare are now posted on the health unit's [website](#).

Risk Assessment

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to assess the risk of spread of COVID-19 within Canada as **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.
- Given the increasing likelihood of a COVID-19 pandemic, it is advised that people be prepared for that possibility by ensuring at least a two week supply of food staples, medications, and essential household supplies. It is also wise to 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

- Disruptions to the global supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) are leaving some countries ill-equipped to care for patients. The World Health Organization (WHO) is working with governments, industry and the Pandemic

Supply Chain Network to boost production and secure supplies for critically affected and at-risk countries.

- For more information see the [WHO daily situation reports](#).

National

- **NEW** – The case definition for COVID-19 has been updated with new recommendations for travellers coming to Canada from Iran. Recommendations are:

All travellers returning from Iran and 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 the affected area; and
- [monitor](#) your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing and contact Telehealth (1-866-797-0000), your health care provider, or your local public health department by phone (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 (1-866-797-0000), 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 March 3, 2020 include: Mainland China (excluding Taiwan and Macau), Iran, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

- **NEW** – The Public Health Agency of Canada has released [guidance](#) on COVID-19 for schools (K-12) and childcare programs, including recommendations for school administrators, considerations for remote and isolated communities, and psychological considerations.
- 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 and Iran.
 - 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

- **NEW** – Fact sheets for: a) self-monitoring for symptoms, b) self-isolation, and c) guidance for caregivers, household members and close contacts are now available on the [Public Health Ontario website](#).
- The Ontario Ministry of Health (OMOH) continues to work with federal and local partners to support the remaining repatriated citizens under quarantine and those in self-isolation.
- The OMOH is involved in future scenario planning amongst provincial partners and stakeholders.

SMDHU

- **NEW** – With increasing community transmission in countries outside of China, SMDHU advises that individuals, communities, organizations, businesses and families prepare for potential disruption to normal life if the virus starts to infect people locally.
- **NEW** – Information on [how to prepare for a possible pandemic situation](#) is now available on the SMDHU website in addition to information about [COVID-19](#).
- SMDHU continues to work with community partners and stakeholders to preparing for the possibility of a pandemic occurring provincially and locally in the upcoming weeks/months.
- Updated [screening signs](#) for any sector/location are available in multiple languages.
- Health sector partners continue to be updated 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](#).
- Partners and the public are updated through the [SMDHU website](#), social media, press releases, media interviews and COVID-19 [fact sheets](#) (available in multiple languages)
- The SMDHU 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:
 - If they are returning from Hubei province in China or Iran; or
 - 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 March 3, 2020 include:** Mainland China (excluding Taiwan and Macau), Iran, Hong Kong, 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)