

## MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS **ALERT**

January 27, 2020

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Dr. Kamran Golmohammadi

Dr. Silvina Mema

Dr. Sue Pollock

Dr. Karin Goodison

**CONTACT INFO:**

**Duty MHO line (24/7)**  
**1-866-457-5648**

**\*\*\*This MHO alert supersedes the alert issued on January 24. Please use this guidance instead\*\*\***

Interior Health and its partners continue to monitor the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in China. As of January 26, 2020, there have been 2,014 cases reported globally (99% of which are in China). In addition, 56 deaths have been confirmed, all of which occurred in China. Two positive presumptive cases with linkages to Wuhan City have been announced in Ontario.

The risk to Interior Health residents continues to be considered low, however we request that our colleagues in community remain vigilant for suspected cases of 2019-nCoV. While many travelers may seek medical attention for respiratory illness during the winter months, the vast majority will have common viral or bacterial infections. It is important however to maintain a low threshold for discussing cases that meet the screening criteria with the local Medical Health Officer.

Please note that the situation is evolving rapidly and the criteria for screening and testing may change. We will keep you informed with updates of these changes as they arise. At this time, we recommend the following guidance on the screening, management and investigation of patients:

Call your local **Medical Health Officer on call** if your patient presents with:

- Travel to the **Hubei Province (where Wuhan City is located)** within 14 days of symptom onset, **AND**
- Fever and acute respiratory illness with or without pneumonia, **OR**
- Severe Respiratory Illness requiring hospitalization with a history of travel to China within the last 14 days

**Notify the Communicable Disease (CD) Unit at 1-866-778-7736 (M-F 8:30-16:30) or the on call Medical Health Officer (MHO) 1-866-457-5648 (after hours and weekends)**

Patients under investigation for 2019-nCoV should be managed with contact and droplet precautions (including surgical mask and eye protection). If a symptomatic client with the above travel/ contact risk factors presents to your clinic promptly provide the client a mask, place client in a single patient room, and initiate contact and droplet precautions.

The CD Unit or on-call MHO will work with you and your client to arrange testing if deemed necessary and work with your local Emergency Department or Hospital if there is a need for a transfer.

Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs and throat swabs can be performed using contact and droplet precautions with surgical mask and eye protection, and do not require the use of an N95 respirator. N95 respirators additional precautions should be used during aerosol-generating procedures (i.e. sputum collection).

Updates are available on the BCCDC web site here:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/communicable-diseases/emerging-respiratory-virus-updates>

World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Report-6, 26 January 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>