

## **PUBLIC NOTICE - NTHSSA – OPERATIONAL RESPONSE FOR COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS**

**March 12, 2020**

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is notifying the public of the following actions.

### **ALL NWT RESIDENTS:**

- Residents may notice enhanced signage and prominence of hand hygiene stations at our facilities. This is for the safety of residents, staff, and patients.
- Visitors to facilities may be asked screening questions to ensure we are protecting patients at acute care sites and residents at long term care facilities. We are asking any residents who are currently experiencing illness or who meet the criteria for self-isolation to call for advice regarding treatment options before presenting to a facility.
  - Self isolation criteria: travel outside NWT in past 14 days and flu-like symptoms, or travel to Italy, Iran, or Hubei Province, China Iran in previous 14 days

### **TESTING PROCEDURES:**

#### **All locations:**

For individuals who are experiencing significant symptoms, such as shortness of breath, or worsening condition, and feel that you need immediate medical care you should call 911 and also call ahead to your health centre or hospital facility and notify staff. You should also call ahead if you will be transporting yourself to the facility.

If you are sick but well enough to stay at home, please see advice below for testing procedures before presenting at a care site.

In order to ensure testing is directed to those who are at highest risk please follow the guidance from the Chief Public Health Office: If you are returning from outside of the NWT, monitor yourself and your family members for symptoms like fever, cough or difficulty breathing for 14 days after your return from travel. If you or

your family members develop symptoms, self-isolate and review the following instructions for your community:

- **Yellowknife:** call Public Health at (867) 767-9120. There are dedicated nursing staff who will complete an intake questionnaire and provide details about where to get tested. There will be a dedicated testing site for covid-19 testing and we want all residents who may need testing to first speak with Public Health and not present to our facilities if they believe they need testing.
- **Inuvik / Fort Smith / Hay River:** call Public Health to complete an intake questionnaire. Those who require testing will be visited for in-home testing.
  - **Inuvik:** (867) 777-7246
  - **Fort Smith:** (867) 872-6219 or (867) 872-6221
  - **Hay River:** 867-874-7201
- **Other Communities:** call your health centre directly for more information on local testing processes. For local contacts visit <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/hospitals-and-health-centres>.

### **SERVICE REDUCTIONS:**

In order to ensure appropriate resources for response and preparedness for COVID-19 we will be implementing reduced services as required. Reduced services help us free up resources by reducing or eliminating non-essential services.

### **YELLOWKNIFE SERVICE REDUCTIONS:**

The following services in Yellowknife, specifically in the Public Health unit, will be reduced, suspended, or delayed until further notice:

- **Well child appointments** will continue but only for vaccinations, the well-child assessments where weight, developmental milestones, etc are monitored will be deferred to a later time. For parents with children due for vaccinations, appointments will continue but will be shortened and the assessments completed at a later date, deferred assessments will be put on a waitlist for follow up.
- **Routine vaccination appointments** are being reviewed and triaged based on priority. Those with rescheduled appointments will be contacted directly.
- **Breastfeeding clinic** will be rescheduled with any concerns from those who would normally attend to be redirected to Public Health for triage to a Registered Nurse to discuss issues via telephone to determine need for appointment. Those who need appointments will continue to be accommodated.
- **All in-school programming** will be suspended until further notice, any education related requests that have been booked will be rescheduled to a

later date and teachers can reach out to their dedicated Public Health Nurse for lesson plans and resource.

- **HPV Programming** for Grade 5 students will not be occurring the week of April 26<sup>th</sup> and will be rescheduled to June 2020.
- Regular **appearances at community group sessions** will be suspended until further notice. If you have a community group that has a public health nurse attend for education or information purposes please make contact with public health. Information and lesson plans that would be routinely used for these groups can be provided. Communication about when participation in these groups will be issued at a later date.

## ONGOING COMMUNICATION

As stated by the Chief Public Health Officer advice and actions related to response to COVID-19 in the NWT can change quickly so it is important to continue to monitor the Department of Health and Social Services website which will continue to be the source of all public information issued.

The NTHSSA will continue to provide operational updates as we adjust operations to ensure appropriate response and preparedness.

## Useful Resources

- Source of truth for public info is the [Department of Health and Social Services Website](#).
- DHSS web page gathering latest COVID-19 information: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>.
- [General Information on COVID-19](#) (PDF)
- [Self-Monitoring Guide](#) (PDF)
- [Prevention: Healthy Respiratory Practices](#) (PDF)
- [FAQs](#) (Webpage)