MEMO

Date: March 25, 2020
To: All Health Care Providers, Physicians and Staff
From: Dr. Brent Roussin
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer

Lanette Siragusa, Provincial Lead
Provincial Lead Health System Integration & Quality,
Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health

Re: COVID-19 – Guidelines for Screening of Manitoba Health Care Workers who have Traveled outside of Manitoba (Physicians and Staff)

In response to the evolving COVID-19 situation, all Manitobans, including health-care providers and first responders have been strongly advised to cancel or postpone any non-essential travel, including travel within Canada.

Public Health Officials have directed all returning travelers, including those returning from travel within Canada, to self-isolate and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days following their return to Manitoba.

Effective March 23, 2020 the following guidelines for screening Manitoba health care workers (including staff and physicians) are in place.

Symptomatic Physicians

• All symptomatic physicians returning from travel, including travel within Canada, must immediately self-identify to their employer’s Occupational Health Services or designate. For organizations that do not have Occupational Health Services, these services will be available centrally for employees by calling toll-free 1-888-203-4066.

Asymptomatic Physicians

• All asymptomatic physicians who are returning from travel, including travel within Canada, are directed to contact their site/sector medical director, as applicable, or their organization’s Chief Medical Officer who will determine if they are required to attend the workplace or are deemed “operationally required” to their respective service area.

For exemptions deemed necessary, medical leadership must consult with Dr. Allen Kraut, Medical Director, Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, in order for a risk assessment to be conducted related to the physician’s travel exposure. Further information regarding this process will be provided by the respective Chief Medical Officer of each regional health authority/service delivery organization.
Asymptomatic health-care workers (non-physician)

- All health-care workers who are asymptomatic are directed to contact their manager.

Exceptions to self-isolation

- The return to the workplace of any staff member who has travelled outside Manitoba within the last 14 days is **not permitted** without the approval of Occupational Health Services or designate following a detailed risk assessment.

- Under exceptional circumstances, when the staff person has unique skills that cannot be provided by any other providers which may create a patient safety risk, the manager can request an ‘exception’ to self-isolation. “Exception” requests to return staff to the workplace are limited to work situations where no alternative other than the return of the staff member exists to ensure for necessary, specialized and/or time-sensitive work. All other available staffing processes must be considered prior to an exception request being initiated.

- If a manager believes that there is need for an “exception request”, the manager must receive **approval from their Director. If the Director supports the request for an exception**, the manager must complete the appropriate paperwork, (exception request form) have the director sign the form and forward by fax/scan and email Occupational Health Services or designate.

- The employee may not return to the workplace until Occupational Health Services has completed their detailed risk assessment and clears the staff member to return to work. Managers are reminded that **all contact with staff returning from travel must be conducted via telephone or video conference until Occupational Health Services has cleared the employee for work**.

- Should the employee be deemed “operationally required” AND approved to work **following the staff health risk assessment** AND is asymptomatic, staff may return to work but must avoid contact with high risk patients. The employee will be required to self-monitor for symptoms, including monitoring their temperature twice a day and to wear a procedure/surgical mask for the duration of their shift and self-monitoring period.
  - When masks are removed for breaks/eating staff should remain 6 feet from other people, follow social distancing guidelines and ensure hand hygiene is practiced.
  - Masks should be changed when they become soiled or wet. When changing masks staff should remain 6 feet from other people follow social distancing guidelines and ensure hand hygiene is practiced.

- **Infection Prevention & Control direction related to masks includes** avoiding touching the face during patient care and ensuring nose, mouth, and chin are covered when wearing. Change masks if they become wet or soiled (from the wearer’s breathing or due to an external splash), if breathing becomes difficult, or following interaction with a patient on Additional Precautions. For full directions, refer to:
• Health-care workers and physicians must immediately remove themselves from work if any symptoms develop, self-isolate and notify Occupational Health Services. When not at work, they should self-isolate at home for the full 14-day period.

• Managers are reminded that all contact with staff returning from travel must be conducted via telephone or video conference until those staff have been cleared for work by OESH.

Exceptions are in place to allow for health-care workers, first responders and physicians who travel within another country and travel regularly within Canada to work (including remote fly-in communities). These health-care workers are subject to the same guidelines for symptomatic or asymptomatic status as above.

This recommendation does not include:
• the commercial transportation of goods and services;
• workers who live in a neighbouring jurisdiction and travel to Manitoba for work;
• health-care workers who travel to work from outside the province;
• normal personal travel in border communities.