

## MEMO

**Date:** March 23, 2020  
**To:** All Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Assistants  
**From:** **Dr. Brent Roussin**  
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
**Lanette Siragusa, Provincial Lead**  
Health System Integration & Quality,  
Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health  
  
**Re:** **COVID-19 – Non-Essential Diagnostic Services**

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Beginning March 23, 2020 only essential diagnostic testing – laboratory, imaging and cardiac services, should be ordered for both inpatient and outpatient populations.

Further to this, Diagnostic Testing/investigation should only be ordered on patients for whom immediate care management will be guided by it. Routine laboratory, imaging and non-invasive cardiac diagnostic testing should be deferred.

With enhanced visitor precautions in place at healthcare facilities across Manitoba, so too should unnecessary outpatient visits be restricted in order to minimize risk to patients, staff and our community.

In all instances where deferral of routine laboratory investigations will not impact patient management, including lab tests ordered in prior clinic visits, patients should be contacted and advised not to present to the laboratory until further notice.

In instances of patients who meet any of the following criteria, outpatient tests and/or procedures should be deferred to comply with the full 14 day self-isolation period and rescheduled on an expedited basis. Criteria include:

- Any patient who has returned from travel outside Manitoba since March 23, 2020 should comply with the full 14 day self-isolation period, even if asymptomatic; Any patient within their 14 day self-isolation period should not have a non-essential test or procedure; **OR**
- Any patient who has had exposure to a confirmed or \*suspected case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days, even if asymptomatic; **OR** (Note: \*Suspected may include scenarios like: large events with confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 subsequently diagnosed; flights/cruises announced in connection with confirmed case(s) of COVID-19; OR large conferences with international attendees.

- Any patient who has been in direct contact with a person who is undergoing testing for COVID-19 should not have their procedure until the results are confirmed negative, even if asymptomatic.
- Any patient who has an influenza-like illness at the time they show up for their procedure should not have their procedure;
- Any patient who has an unexplained new cough, even if they do not have a fever, at the time they show up for their procedure should not have their procedure.

Specific guidance regarding Diagnostic Imaging and Non-Invasive Cardiac Testing changes will be issued in short order. Similarly, guidance regarding specific changes to laboratory testing services will also be issued. Further updates will be distributed as the situation evolves.

These guidelines will supplement clinical judgement and should be followed in the context of your risk assessment for your patients. Should you feel at any time that the new emergency guidelines established to maintain system integrity may pose a risk to your individual patient, immediately contact your radiologist, cardiologist or local laboratory who will work to accommodate reprioritization.

Thank you for your support. We recognize the effect this change will have on you and your patients and appreciate your active involvement in Manitoba's response to COVID-19.