

## ***Managing Novel Coronavirus [COVID-19] Cases and Contacts in the Healthcare Workplace (staff related) Quick Reference for Managers and Human Resources***

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The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as **low** for Canada. Public health risk is continually reassessed as new information becomes available. The risk to Canadian travellers abroad is generally low but will vary depending on the destination.

**Service Delivery Organizations (SDO's) without Occupational Health Services should designate appropriate resources internal OR external to assess, screen and follow up with staff while following the guidance within this document. In this document, Occupational Health Nurse applies to the designated resource.**

### **Healthcare Staff – Notification to Occupational Health Nurse (OHN):**

If they have not already done so, staff meeting any of the following criteria in the previous 14 days should contact Occupational Health Services (or designate) immediately:

- Staff who have identified that they have returned from countries experiences community transmission of COVID-19, as listed here <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html>;  
*Note: Staff who are returning from international travel to areas other than those specifically listed in the link above **DO NOT** have to contact Occupational Health unless they are symptomatic but must self monitor for symptoms suggestive of respiratory infection and only contact Occupational Health if they become symptomatic*
- Staff who have experienced a laboratory exposure to biological material (e.g. primary clinical specimens, virus culture isolates) known to contain COVID-19;
- Staff with family/close contact who are person(s) under investigation (PUI), probable or confirmed case; OR
- Staff not yet returned from affected areas.

As with all exposures, staff who have experienced an exposure (inappropriate use of/breach of personal protective equipment PPE) while providing care (close contact – within 2 meters/ 6 feet) to a patient with confirmed or suspect COVID-19 OR present when an aerosol generating procedure is being performed on a patient with confirmed or suspect COVID-19 and not wearing appropriate PPE should be directed to notify the Occupational Health Nurse.

### **Assess/Screen Staff:**

Occupational Health will verify risk factors (e.g. travel location, close contacts, etc.) which may result in laboratory testing by either the OHN or disposition to Urgent Care/ER. Staff who meet the screening criteria and are symptomatic are Persons Under Investigation (PUI) while awaiting laboratory test results.

### **Staff Determined to be Person Under Investigation (PUI), Probable or Confirmed Case:**

If staff member is determined to be a PUI, probable or confirmed case and is well enough to be cared for at home, she/he will be directed to self-isolate at home while symptomatic and not go to work, school or other public areas until symptoms have resolved and the person is feeling well enough to resume normal activities and COVID-19 has been ruled out. Occupational Health or Public Health (dependent on who gave the direction to self-isolate) will conduct active daily monitoring of the case/PUI's health status for duration of illness (and until they have met the criteria for discontinuing isolation) and until laboratory investigation has ruled out 2019-nCoV infection. Staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 should only return to work after being cleared by Occupational Health with input from Infectious Diseases.

### **Asymptomatic staff determined to be close contacts of probable and confirmed cases OR**

**Asymptomatic staff returning from an area from which return requires self-isolation OR Laboratory worker exposed during work**

Although these staff members do not have symptoms they must self-isolate at home for 14 days since exposure or return to Canada and have active daily monitoring as per section above.

**Staff determined to be returning well traveler from countries experiencing community transmission of COVID-19 or areas where cases have been identified (link above)**

Individuals are advised to self-monitor health status for 14 days.

- Self-isolation is generally **NOT** required however in some situations there may be work exclusions as detailed directly below. If symptoms develop individuals should then self-isolate as quickly as possible and call Occupational Health, Public health or Health Links in advance of attending Urgent Care/ER. If it is an emergency, the person should call 911 and report their travel history.
  - For returning travellers from areas with cases OHN or designate will verify area of travel and contact with ill persons. Factors such as where the individual traveled and the number of cases in that area will be considered. In some cases dependent on area of travel and cluster history work restrictions similar to being a contact of a known case may be appropriate.
  - For health care workers who are recommended to self-monitor for symptoms without self-isolation, Occupational Health or designate will review their ability to self-isolate if symptoms develop while at work and other special considerations related to their role, as well as their risk of exposure related to their travel history. In a small number of situations, their role may not be suitable for a person who is self-monitoring for symptoms and may require exclusion from work or specific tasks.

**Staff with Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Symptoms**

As Respiratory Season is underway, staff with ILI symptoms should be directed to report to Occupational Health or designate where they will be assessed/screened as outlined above. If the staff member does not meet the definition of exposure for COVID-19 but has ILI symptoms they shall be excluded from work for 3-5 days after onset of symptoms. HCWs should **only** return to work when they are well enough to work and have been afebrile (without fever and without using fever lowering medication) for 24 hours.

**Income protection and workers compensation claims**

An employee who contracts a communicable disease while in the performance of their work may qualify for Workers Compensation Benefits, including wage loss benefits. There must be a confirmed diagnosis from a medical professional. A claim with the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) should be submitted. Work Related Injury/Illness reporting process should be followed and is required to start the Employer's Report to the WCB.

*Note: Seasonal Influenza is considered an ordinary disease of life and is not compensable through WCB.*

Staff who are advised to self-isolate (quarantine) are not eligible for WCB benefits. These staff should utilize income protection/sick leave banks and/or short term disability benefits if available. Consideration may be given to allowing staff without income protection to utilize vacation or overtime banks. Staff can be referred to Employment Insurance Sick Benefits.

**This guidance is informed by currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion, and is subject to change as new information on transmissibility and epidemiology becomes available and refers to the Guidance Public Health Measures. Ensure you are viewing the most recent version of this document.**

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus>