

March 10, 2020

Dear Licensees/Managers:

Re: Update on novel coronavirus

We are writing to give you updated information on the novel coronavirus causing respiratory illness (COVID-19).

In BC, most recent infections have been linked to travel from Iran or close contacts of travelers. While a number of infections were previously reported from Hubei Province, China, travel restrictions and transmission control in that region have limited the ongoing export of cases. There have been a small number of cases of COVID-19 in B.C., which have been very closely managed with some cases now recovered. The risk to British Columbians remains low.

Our knowledge of this virus continues to grow and we are using new information to adjust our public health recommendations. We are now aware of early evidence that this virus can cause a range of mild to severe symptoms, and it is possible that people will not recognize symptoms that are mild. During this time, people can reduce the chance of spread by limiting contact with others.

Public Health advice for children and staff

- Children or staff who are now returning from **Iran or China** are asked to stay home for 14 days after leaving those countries. They should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough. Parents should assist children as needed.
- Children or staff who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-2019 are asked to stay home for 14 days after their last encounter. Individuals should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever and cough.
- Children or staff who have travelled to other areas do not need to stay home from the childcare facility, but should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough for 14 days.
- Generally, students with colds may go to childcare facilities if they feel well enough to take part in activities; mild symptoms of the common cold may include a runny nose and sneezing. Children with symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat should stay home from school.

- Contacts of confirmed cases will be contacted by public health to discuss precautions. If a childcare exposure is identified in follow-up with a confirmed case, public health will contact the relevant facility to discuss next steps.

Those who develop symptoms should stay home and call their health-care provider or 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow up.

It is not necessary to cancel childcare facility events, outings or field trips to public locations.

While these recommendations are important, they are voluntary. Licensees, administrators, staff and parent groups are not expected to enforce or monitor them.

The public and childcare community are being asked not to make assumptions about the risk of children or staff based on their ethnicity or travel history.

If you have concerns, including those regarding an individual case, please contact a Medical Health Officer at 604-675-3900 or toll-free at 1-855-675-3900.

Yours Sincerely,



Mark Lysyshyn MD MPH FRCPC
Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health