

Main Office - Belleville

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March 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

On March 20 the Ministry of Health has updated [Guidance for Primary Care Physicians](#). In addition, [Guidance for Consumption and Treatment Service](#) (CTS) sites was released on March 23 with specific instruction on screening, reporting, and occupational health and safety for health care workers during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Health encourages all primary care providers to implement a system for virtual and/or telephone consultations when and where possible. Non-essential face-to-face appointments should be postponed or converted to virtual appointments. All primary care settings should undertake active and passive screening as detailed in the Guidance for Primary Care Physicians. The [Guide to Associated Billing Codes](#) prepared by the OMA, and all other relevant guidance documents, is available on our COVID-19 Health Care Provider webpage at hpePublicHealth.ca/covid-19-hcp.

COVID-19 testing options for patients who meet the [COVID 19 case definition](#) include the primary care office, emergency departments, in-patient units and long-term care homes as long as appropriate infection prevention and control precautions are implemented. In addition, community testing is currently facilitated by Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH). Proposals for local Assessment Centres are currently under development and will be operationalized in conjunction with local partners, pending government process and funding approval.

Testing for COVID-19 should be considered in patients who:

- Meet COVID-19 case definition (travel history or exposure to probable or confirmed case) with priority for:
 - critical health care workers,
 - those at risk in institutional settings such as long-term care homes,
 - severely ill patients requiring admission, and
 - pregnant patients.
- Patients with compatible COVID-19 symptoms and no travel history or known contact who are:

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- Critical health care worker,
- Institutionalized such as long-term care/retirement home resident,
- Severely ill patients requiring admission,
- Pregnant patients, and
- First Nation Community members living on-reserve.

Locally, **any** travel outside of Canada within 14 days of symptom onset is considered to meet the exposure component (impacted area) of the current case definition.

Reporting of COVID-19:

COVID-19 is a designated disease of public health significance and is thus reportable under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Regulated health professionals must report all confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 to HPEPH, this includes any patients being tested for COVID-19.

Reports can be made via fax or email using the new **COVID-19 Primary Care Reporting Form** available on our [COVID-19 HCP](#) webpage or by telephone to our Communicable and Infectious Disease intake line 613-966-5500 x 349.

Resolution of Cases

Probable and confirmed COVID-19 cases who are not admitted to hospital are being considered resolved after 14 days from symptom onset and are either symptom free for 24 hours or have significant improvement in residual mild symptoms such as a cough.

We are committed to providing up-to-date information as it becomes available and to continue working with all our community partners to help limit the spread of COVID-19 within our community. We currently have a dedicated COVID-19 information line to help answer questions Monday – Friday 8:30 am - 8:30 pm and from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Saturday and Sunday. Both our [COVID-19 Public webpage](#) and our [COVID-19 HCP webpage](#) are updated regularly to help answer frequently asked questions from our community and share current guidance and updates with our community partners.

Thank you for your continuing efforts.

Sincerely,



Dr. Piotr Oglaza, MD, CPHI(C), CCFP, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and CEO