Coronavirus – Update #22
March 27, 2020

Please print and post/share this update.

Current situation
As of today, March 27, Nova Scotia has 90 positive cases of COVID-19 in people ranging in age from under 10 to mid-70s. Two individuals remain hospitalized. Most cases are connected to travel or a known case. Case investigations are ongoing and at this point, public health cannot confirm a link to community spread. Read the news release here. There have been 3,649 negative test results. Testing numbers are updated daily at https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus.

Current interim Public Health Measures
On March 26, the interim Public Health Measures document was updated. View updated document. Please note updates on these measures will be provided as we receive them.

Our response
NSHA Operational update
On March 27, NSHA released its latest operational update. Read full update. Highlights include:

- Overview of NSHA’s phased COVID-19 response plan
- Modifying the roles of collaborative emergency centres (CECs) in Cumberland County
- Temporary closure of women’s and children’s unit at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre
- Temporary suspension of the Colon Cancer Prevention Program
- Updated visitor restriction information pertaining to cancer patients
- Need to visit your family practice? What you need to know as a patient.
- Online mental health tools
- Assessment Centres update
- COVID-19 misinformation

CEO message and video – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
CEO and President Dr. Brendan Carr recently shared a message with staff and physicians about the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). Read full message. NSHA has enough PPE to meet current demands and teams are working hard to procure additional items for our stockpile. Watch Dr. Carr’s video message for important information about how we’re managing our PPE supply.

Assessment Centres update
New locations for NSHA Assessment Centres continue to be added. See updated list. An updated fax referral form can be found here.
PPE supply status — Some staff and physicians have expressed concern about whether there is enough personal protective equipment (PPE) in Nova Scotia to last through the COVID-19 pandemic. Yesterday, president and CEO Dr. Brendan Carr shared a video message on this topic, reassuring staff and physicians that we have a healthy supply to meet our current need. He reminded staff and physicians that we need to ensure we are using this supply appropriately so that we can continue to meet the need for the duration of the pandemic. As Brendan stated, “It’s important that all of us continue to focus on meeting not only the demands of today, but the demands of a surge we know is coming.” Today we’re sharing a photo of our PPE stockpile to help reassure staff and physicians that we have a robust supply. We are also working to boost our stockpile, following both traditional and innovative procurement streams.

COVID Clinical Medical Advisory Group update
The COVID Clinical Medical Advisory Group has endorsed the following:

COVID swabs from inpatients and those submitted from Occupational Health will be placed first in the queue for testing as they arrive to the laboratory. However, due to increasing volumes, swabs from any other individual patient CANNOT be prioritized by the microbiology laboratory; they will be processed as received. Please do not call the lab to request that an individual patient’s swab be prioritized. Also, please do not call the lab to track down results as it will slow the entire process and increase turnaround time for testing. Once completed, all results will be available in Millennium, the Clinical Portal and SHARE portal. If you do not have access, you can call central reporting at 902-473-2266.

Clinicians who are deciding upon a patient’s disposition, should not be waiting for COVID-19 test results. If the patient requires admission and meets the COVID admission criteria, please contact the COVID-19 inpatient unit. If the patient does not meet the COVID-19 inpatient admission criteria but requires admission, the patient can be placed on droplet and contact precautions on the appropriate unit until the COVID swab is processed and results are known.

Check your sources when sharing information
With widespread concern in the public about COVID-19, there is a lot of inaccurate and misleading information circulating on social media. It is important to remember that we are in a position to reassure people and direct them to accurate and up-to-date information. We ask you to use caution when posting or sharing information. The situation is changing rapidly so please visit https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/, www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus, https://canada.ca/coronavirus and www.nshealth.ca regularly for updates. There are also regular media briefings livestreamed on the Nova Scotia government website where Premier Stephen McNeil and Nova Scotia’s Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Strang provide updates on the COVID-19 situation in Nova Scotia.
Screening protocols for home support
A group of home support agency representatives have worked with NSHA to develop a consistent approach to COVID-19 screening:

- Screening Protocols for Home Support
- COVID-19 Screening Guide for Home Support Service Delivery

Note that these protocols and guide apply to both home support agencies and NSHA continuing care staff and are effective immediately. The screening guide will be updated and distributed if changes in provincial direction on screening are made. Care coordinators with questions should contact their manager. Home care agencies with questions should contact the continuing care zone director.

Dalhousie University Printing Services reducing hours of operation
Due to the present situation with COVID-19, Dalhousie University Printing Services has reduced its hours of operation to one day per week – Wednesdays – effective March 20. Stock of the most commonly ordered NSHA items has been increased. Requisitions for those forms will be packaged and delivered to respective mailrooms on Wednesdays of each week until further notice and could take up to two weeks to reach remote sites. All other printing will be completed on a case-by-case basis, but turnaround times for these items will be affected. Learn more.

New/Updated guidance documents and resources
- Clinical Flow Pathway for Patients with COVID-19 (March 27, 2020)
- COVID-19 Assessment Clinic Cost Centres (updated: March 27, 2020)
- COVID-19 Family Practice Screening Guide (updated: March 27, 2020)
- COVID-19 Hematology Oncology BMT Chemo Patient Flow (March 27, 2020)
- COVID-19 Inpatient Unit Admission Criteria (March 26, 2020)
- COVID-19 Oncology Protocol (March 25, 2020)
- COVID-19 Screening Sign – Chinese (updated: March 27, 2020)
- Kidney Replacement Support (March 25, 2020)
- Long-Term Care-COVID-Family Info (March 26, 2020)
- Long-Term Care-COVID-Provider Info (March 26, 2020)
- Long-Term Care COVID-Provider Worksheet (March 26, 2020)
- Management of Surgical Cases – Halifax Infirmary OR example (March 20, 2020)
- Recommendations for Triage of Urgent, Benign and Cancer Surgery (March 26, 2020)
- Surgical Screening Tool for Emergency/Urgent Wait List Surgeries (March 24, 2020)
- Virtual Appointment Practice Guidelines (March 17, 2020)
- Virtual Visit Implementation Guide – Primary Health Care (March 25, 2020)
- Visitor Restrictions Sign – Legal – ENG - bw (updated: March 27, 2020)
- Visitor Restrictions Sign – Legal – ENG - colour (updated: March 27, 2020)
- Visitor Restrictions Sign – Legal – FR - bw (updated: March 27, 2020)
- Visitor Restrictions Sign – Legal – FR - colour (updated: March 27, 2020)
- Visitor Restrictions Sign – Letter – ENG – colour (updated: March 27, 2020)
**Occupational Health/People Services**

**Good Samaritan bulletin board**
We understand the demands of balancing work and family life can be challenging in the best of times, and during times of uncertainty, we all may need additional support and information to help manage the changes to our usual routine, schedules, and responsibilities. The [Good Samaritan Bulletin Board](#) is designed to serve as an online space where you and your teammates may offer help, information and resources to support each other during these uncertain times. This bulletin board will allow NSHA team members to come together and offer solutions, resources and assistance or seek assistance from fellow teammates. Please ensure you are logged in to post new items. **Note:** all suggested postings will be approved and officially posted by a site administrator - Dana Jakeman. Please contact Dana with questions, comments or concerns at [dana2.jakeman@nshealth.ca](mailto:dana2.jakeman@nshealth.ca).

**Updated Q&A for employees**
We continue to receive many of the same inquiries and feel it is important to reinforce some commonly asked questions along with their answers. An updated list can be found [here](#).

**Hearts for health care**
We’ve been hearing some truly positive and up-lifting stories these past weeks, and we wanted to take this opportunity to share some of them with you.

*This kind measure and thoughtful gesture from Cabot Links Golf Course and Resort was much appreciated by the staff at Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital.*

![Image of messages of thanks from Cabot Links Golf Course and Resort](#)

**Links/contacts**
For up-to-date information, please visit [NSHA’s coronavirus intranet page](#).

Questions can be directed to [coronavirus@nshealth.ca](mailto:coronavirus@nshealth.ca).