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Public Health Services, Healthy and Safe Communities
Epidemiology, Wellness and Communicable Disease Control
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MEDICAL ADVISORY Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

TO: Family Physicians
Emergency Departments
Infectious Disease Physicians
LTCH Administrators/Directors of Care
Medical Laboratories
Infection Control Professionals (**please inform Labs**)
St. Joseph's Centre for Ambulatory Health Services, Urgent Care

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Central West Medical Officers of Health
Academy of Medicine
Dr. Michael Stacey, VP Medical, Hamilton Health Sciences
Mr. Bruce Squires, President, McMaster Children's Hospital
Dr. David Russell, Chief of Staff, St. Joseph's Healthcare
LHIN, Dr. Jennifer Everson, Jodi Sanders

FROM: Dr. Bart Harvey, MD, PhD, MEd, FRCPC
Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: January 27, 2020

Background

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is closely monitoring the ongoing outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China. Imported cases have begun to be identified in other countries, including Canada.

About the novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

This novel Coronavirus, now referred to as 2019-nCoV is part of the Coronavirus family, which can cause a wide range of illnesses including the common cold, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

On January 22, 2020 Ontario's Minister of Health declared the 2019-nCoV a Disease of Public Health Significance. As a result, **the local Medical Officer of Health must be notified of any suspect cases of 2019-nCoV immediately by calling (905) 546-2063.**

Laboratory Testing and Health Care Recommendations

While the morbidity, mortality and transmission potential of 2019-nCoV are not fully established, the Public Health Ontario (PHO) laboratory is providing testing for suspect cases meeting the following:

- Fever and acute respiratory illness, or pneumonia; AND
- Travelled to Wuhan within 14 days prior to symptom onset; OR
- Had close contact with someone with acute respiratory illness and who had been in Wuhan, China, within 14 days of their illness onset; OR
- Had close contact with someone known to have the novel coronavirus.

Testing for 2019-nCoV requires prior approval by the PHO Laboratory before submission and ideally after a physician has seen the patient. For approval, contact PHO Laboratory's

Customer Service Centre at 416-235-6556/1-877-604-4567 or the After-Hours Emergency Duty Officer at 416-605-3113.

Infection Prevention and Control:

At this time the following is recommended for **acute care settings**:

- Routine practices and additional precautions (contact, droplet and airborne) by health care workers at risk of exposure to suspect cases and/or the patient's environment. These precautions include:
- Hand hygiene.
- Use of airborne infection isolation rooms when possible; if not possible use of a single room.
- Masking the patient with a surgical mask when outside of an airborne infection isolation room.
- Use of gloves, gown, fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirators and eye protection for all direct patient care, when entering the same room as the patient, transporting the patient, for aerosol-generating procedures and collection of laboratory specimens.
- Attention to correct donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Precautions for Physician's Office:

- Ensure patients, when booking non-urgent appointments, are screened specifically for travel to Wuhan, China in the previous 14 days before arranging to see them.
- For callers reporting fever and respiratory symptoms with NO travel to Wuhan and no contact with an ill person with known travel to affected area, can be seen using droplet and contact precautions. Consider other seasonal circulating respiratory viruses.
- For callers, with fever and acute respiratory symptoms who have travelled to Wuhan or have had contact with an individual who has travelled (as outlined above) in the last 14 days:
 - Advise caller to be seen at the local emergency department.
 - Please call the appropriate hospital's emergency department to inform them that the person is coming for assessment of 2019-nCoV.
 - Patient should be masked prior to transport to hospital, if possible, or immediately upon arrival.
 - Routine practices and additional precautions as described above based on risk assessment.
 - Please call Hamilton Public Health Services immediately at 905-546-2063.

While cases have been identified in Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to assess the public health risk associated with 2019-nCoV as low for Canadians.

Hamilton Public Health Services will continue to update health care partners as new information becomes available.

For more information about this novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), please visit the resources found below:

[World Health Organization - Coronavirus](#)
[Public Health Ontario Novel Coronavirus Test Information Sheet](#)
[Ministry of Health – Newsroom Update January 22, 2020](#)
[Public Health Ontario Routine Practices and Additional Precautions](#)
[Government of Canada Travel Advice and Advisories](#)
[Public Health Ontario Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) Laboratory Services](#)

For further information, please contact Hamilton Public Health Services, Infectious Disease program at **(905) 546-2063**.