



March 13, 2020

Dear health care workers,

I am writing to further clarify and explain my advice on travel in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and what that means for you, your colleagues, and your patients.

As you likely heard, yesterday I recommended against non-essential travel outside of Canada, and that as of March 13, 2020, those who do travel outside of Canada are being asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days upon their return.

Please be advised that self-isolation **does not** apply to health-care workers who travel outside of Canada and provide direct patient care (e.g. physicians, nurses, care aides, etc.) unless they have travelled to Hubei Province in China, Italy, or Iran.

However, all health-care providers who have travelled outside of Canada are required to self-monitor daily and use appropriate PPE when providing care. If a health-care worker develops symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact their regional medical health officer:

- Fraser Health – 1-604-527-4806
- Interior Health – 1-866-457-5648
- Northern Health – 1-250-565-2000
- Vancouver Coastal – 1-604-527-4893
- Island Health – 1-800-204-6166

If a health-care provider develops symptoms while providing care, they should immediately put on a mask and finish any essential services they are providing before self-isolating.

The focus in BC continues to be to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and at a provincial level. As you know, the majority of people who become infected with COVID-19 will experience a mild illness that will not require medical care, but those who are vulnerable to the disease—those who are elderly or who have underlying conditions that compromise the immune system—are at risk for severe illness.

To ensure we are able to provide patient care, especially to those most vulnerable, and to make sure that our health system and our health-care providers are able to care for those who become severely ill, we are asking people to self-monitor their health and to apply a low threshold when feeling unwell to stay home until they are better.

In your offices, consider increasing routine cleaning practices. If frequently touched surfaces are being cleaned and disinfected once a day, move to twice a day. Consider the density of your office and provide additional space for patients; for example, consider how line-ups or seating

could be expanded so that people are able to put some distance of one to two metres between one another. Support your MOAs to stay home if they are sick.

Other countries have adopted more restrictive containment approaches; this is not the path we are taking in BC. We expect that transmission of COVID-19 will increase in the province and are providing advice and recommendations in response to the situation as it evolves in an effort to slow transmission.

Please check the BCCDC site often for updates and resources for health care professionals:
www.bccdc.ca/covid19care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer