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COVID-19 GN Update

August 27, 2020

Premier's update:

Good afternoon. There are still no confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 in Nunavut. The total number of persons followed to date is 2152. There are 314 persons currently being followed.

Before I let Dr. Patterson speak to the situation at our Ottawa isolation hub, I want to remind everyone that there is no need to panic or place any blame. Instead, this is a time to stay vigilant about our public health measures – wash your hands often, keep physical distance, and stay home if you are sick.

There will be many questions over the coming days and probably a lot of speculation about this situation. Let's all remember to deal with facts instead of opinions and misinformation.

Please stay kind, calm and well. Let's keep one another and our communities safe.

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COVID-19 GN Update

Chief Public Health Officer update:

Good afternoon. On August 26, my office was informed by Ottawa Public Health that a security guard at the Residence Inn isolation site in Ottawa had tested positive for COVID-19.

Immediately after being notified, the Department of Health began working with Ottawa Public Health to assess the risk and begin contact tracing. It was determined that risk of exposure was limited to August 18 and 19.

We have identified 24 isolation clients as low risk contacts, meaning that their contact with the positive individual was brief. Each of those individuals have been contacted and advised of the next steps. The contacts have been told to self-monitor. They can go about their daily lives but are being advised to avoid gatherings and high-risk facilities such as elders' homes. They can still attend work but should continue social distancing and hand washing.

While we are confident that all contacts of this individual have been identified, out of additional precaution, we ask that Nunavummiut who stayed at the Residence Inn after August 19 and who travelled back to Nunavut self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone who develops symptoms, including cough, fever or difficulty breathing should call the COVID hotline at 1-888-975-8601 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. EDT, or notify their community health centre right away, and immediately isolate at home for 14 days.

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COVID-19 GN Update

Nunavummiut at the Residence Inn who were scheduled to return to Nunavut today have been rescheduled to fly on Sunday. I have been told that the delay in travel will not create a waiting list to get into isolation and the Sunday flight is an added travel day to clear the extra travellers who were delayed today.

Contract staff at the isolation sites, including security personnel, are required to wear masks for the duration of their shifts, a measure designed to limit the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to other staff and guests. The investigation concluded the guard who tested positive had been properly wearing a mask at all times while on shift.

I know that some Nunavummiut have questions and concerns about schools reopening. It is important to highlight that based on the latest public health information all schools should open at Stage 1, meaning there is no proven transmission of COVID-19 in territory.

I want to remind Nunavummiut that this is not the time to take public health measures such as social distancing for granted and ask them to be understanding and to avoid placing blame. No one asks to get COVID-19 and no one wants to pass it along.

Thank you.