

## **News Release**

For Immediate Release

## Rapid Response Team deployed to Hope Bay Mine

**Iqaluit, Nunavut (September 28, 2020)** – The Department of Health has activated its COVID Rapid Response Team in response to seven new presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 at TMAC Resources' Hope Bay Mine, 125 km southwest of Cambridge Bay. At this time, there is no established link between these new cases and the previous two confirmed positives at the mine. If swabs come back confirmed from the southern lab, they will count as Nunavut's first COVID-19 cases.

"These latest cases lead us to believe there is transmission of COVID-19 at the Hope Bay Mine. For the safety of all employees at the site, we have deployed our Rapid Response Team," said Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Michael Patterson. "The team, including two nurses and a logistician, is trained to trace, track and contain the virus to help reduce the risk of further transmission."

TMAC Resources contacted the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer on September 26 about an employee developing symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The Department of Health worked with on-site medical staff to swab the symptomatic employee and contacts. The presumptive positive cases and all known contacts have been isolated. Contact tracing is on-going.

In response, all non-essential travel to and from the Mine, including scheduled shift changes, is cancelled until further notice. This situation does not affect the current public health measures, *Nunavut's Path* or the Common Travel Areas with Churchill, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

"Although this is a serious situation, the risk to Nunavummiut is very low," said Minister of Health George Hickes. "There are no Nunavut residents currently working at the Hope Bay Mine, and the site is isolated from all Nunavut communities. As we see cases on the rise in Southern Canada, I encourage all Nunavummiut to be careful, follow our public health advice and remain prepared for COVID-19."

Anyone who has reason to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 is advised to 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 by phone, and immediately isolate at home for 14 days.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include a fever, cough or difficulty breathing. The best protection from spreading or catching the disease is physical distancing, handwashing for at least 20 seconds, coughing and sneezing into an elbow and staying home as much as possible.

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